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ABSTRACT

One of a series of educational packages designed for implementation either in a workshop atmosphere or through individual study, this Hot Topic guide presents a variety of materials to assist educators in designing and implementing classroom projects and activities centering on the topic of outcome-based education. The Hot Topic guide contains guidelines for workshop use; an overview/lecture on outcome-based education; and nine articles (from professional and scholarly journals) and ERIC documents on outcome-based education. A 44-item annotated bibliography of items in the ERIC database on outcome-based education is attached. (RS)

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ED 380 808

HOT TOPIC
GUIDE 56
Outcome-Based Education: Defining the Language Arts Curriculum

[illegible] designed for implementation [illegible] workshop atmospheres or through individual study. [illegible] of numerous educators, the Hot Topic [illegible] address the practical needs [illegible] teachers [illegible] the time to work through the [illegible] way to discussing and implementing a variety of classroom projects and activities centering on this topic.

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by Jan Battistini

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

A collection of selected references and abstracts obtained directly from the ERIC database.

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In-Service Workshops and Seminars:
Suggestions for Using this Hot Topic Guide as a Professional Development Tool

Before the Workshop:

- Carefully review the materials presented in this Hot Topic Guide. Think about how these concepts and projects might be applied to your particular school or district.
- As particular concepts begin to stand out in your mind as being important, use the Bibliography section (found at the end of the packet) to seek out additional resources dealing specifically with those concepts.
- Look over the names of the teachers and researchers who wrote the packet articles and/or are listed in the Bibliography. Are any of the names familiar to you? Do any of them work in your geographical area? Do you have colleagues or acquaintances who are engaged in similar research and/or teaching? Perhaps you could enlist their help and expertise as you plan your workshop or seminar.
- As you begin to plan your activities, develop a mental "movie" of what you'd like to see happening in the classroom as a result of this in-service workshop or seminar. Keep this vision in mind as a guide to your planning.

During the Workshop:

- Provide your participants with a solid grasp of the important concepts that you have acquired from your reading, but don't load them down with excessive detail, such as lots of hard-to-remember names, dates or statistics. You may wish to use the Overview/Lecture section of this packet as a guide for your introductory remarks about the topic.
- Try modeling the concepts and teaching strategies related to the topic by "teaching" a minilesson for your group.
- Remember, if your teachers and colleagues ask you challenging or difficult questions about the topic, that they are not trying to discredit you or your ideas. Rather, they are trying to prepare themselves for situations that might arise as they implement these ideas in their own classrooms.
- If any of the participants are already using some of these ideas in their own teaching, encourage them to share their experiences.
- Even though your workshop participants are adults, many of the classroom management principles that you use every day with your students still apply. Workshop participants, admittedly, have a longer attention span and can sit still longer than your second-graders; but not that much longer. Don't have a workshop that is just a "sit down, shut up, and listen" session. Vary the kinds of presentations and activities you provide in your workshops. For instance, try to include at least one hands-on activity so that the participants will begin to get a feel for how they might apply the concepts that you are discussing in your workshop.
- Try to include time in the workshop for the participants to work in small groups. This time may be a good opportunity for them to formulate plans for how they might use the concepts just discussed in their own classrooms.
- Encourage teachers to go "a step further" with what they have learned in the workshop. Provide additional resources for them to continue their research into the topics discussed, such as books, journal articles, Hot Topic Guides, teaching materials, and local experts. Alert them to future workshops/conferences on related topics.

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After the Workshop:

- Follow up on the work you have done. Have your workshop attendees fill out an End-of-Session Evaluation (a sample is included on the next page). Emphasize that their responses are anonymous. The participants' answers to these questions can be very helpful in planning your next workshop. After a reasonable amount of time (say a few months or a semester), contact your workshop attendees and inquire about how they have used, or haven't used, the workshop concepts in their teaching. Have any surprising results come up? Are there any unforeseen problems?
- When teachers are trying the new techniques, suggest that they invite you to observe their classes. As you discover success stories among teachers from your workshop, share them with the other attendees, particularly those who seem reluctant to give the ideas a try.
- Find out what other topics your participants would like to see covered in future workshops and seminars. There are nearly sixty Hot Topic Guides, and more are always being developed. Whatever your focus, there is probably a Hot Topic Guide that can help. An order form follows the table of contents in this packet.

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Exploring Creative Writing with
Secondary Students

K-12:
Reading across the Curriculum
Writing across the Curriculum
Organization of the Classroom

Course Requirements:

These minicourses are taught by correspondence. Minicourse reading materials consist of Hot Topic Guides and ERIC/EDINFO Press books. You will be asked to write Goal Statements and Reaction Papers for each of the assigned reading materials, and a final Synthesis paper.

I really enjoyed working at my own pace.... It was wonderful to have everything so organized...and taken care of in a manner where I really felt like I was a student, however "distant" I was...."
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Planning a Workshop Presentation
Worksheet

Major concepts you want to stress in this presentation:

1) ____________________

2) ____________________

3) ____________________

Are there additional resources mentioned in the Bibliography that would be worth locating? Which ones? How could you get them most easily?

____

____

Are there resource people available in your area whom you might consult about this topic and/or invite to participate? Who are they?

____

____

What would you like to see happen in participants' classrooms as a result of this workshop? Be as specific as possible.

____

____

____

____

Plans for followup to this workshop: [peer observations, sharing experiences, etc.]

____

____

____

Agenda for Workshop
Planning Sheet

Introduction/Overview:

[What would be the most effective way to present the major concepts that you wish to convey?]

Activities that involve participants and incorporate the main concepts of this workshop:

1) ______________________________

2) ______________________________

Applications:

Encourage participants to plan a mini-lesson for their educational setting that draws on these concepts. [One possibility is to work in small groups, during the workshop, to make a plan and then share it with other participants.]

Your plan to make this happen:

Evaluation:

[Use the form on the next page, or one you design, to get feedback from participants about your presentation.]

END-OF-SESSION EVALUATION

Now that today's meeting is over, we would like to know how you feel and what you think about the things we did so that we can make them better. Your opinion is important to us. Please answer all questions honestly. Your answers are confidential.

1. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ☐ Not worthwhile ☐ Somewhat worthwhile ☐ Very worthwhile

2. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ☐ Not interesting ☐ Somewhat interesting ☐ Very interesting

3. Check (✓) to show if today's leader was

   ☐ Not very good ☐ Just O.K. ☐ Very good

4. Check (✓) to show if the meeting helped you get any useful ideas about how you can make positive changes in the classroom.

   ☐ Very little ☐ Some ☐ Very much

5. Check (✓) to show if today's meeting was

   ☐ Too long ☐ Too short ☐ Just about right

6. Check (✓) whether you would recommend today's meeting to a colleague.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Check (✓) to show how useful you found each of the things we did or discussed today.

   Getting information/new ideas.

   ☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

   Seeing and hearing demonstrations of teaching techniques.

   ☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

   Getting materials to read.

   ☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

Listening to other teachers tell about their own experiences.

☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

Working with colleagues in a small group to develop strategies of our own.

☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

Getting support from others in the group.

☐ Not useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Very useful

8. Please write one thing that you thought was best about today:

9. Please write one thing that could have been improved today:

10. What additional information would you have liked?

11. Do you have any questions you would like to ask?

12. What additional comments would you like to make?

Thank you for completing this form.

Outcome-Based Education

An overview by Jan Battistini, Language Arts/Reading Teacher,
Sycamore Junior High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

Few issues have stirred the educational community in recent years as profoundly as Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Dr. William G. Spady has been promoting the term and its use for over twenty years throughout North America, but only in recent years has the term become widely discussed in school districts throughout the nation. Though OBE has often provoked emotional responses, there are objective questions to be raised about what OBE can and cannot accomplish in a given situation, and ways of dealing with legitimate concerns of parents and educators. Because of the high interest in OBE, it is imperative that both those entering the field of education and veteran educators be conversant with OBE principles and practice.

Principles of Outcome-Based Education

The most basic premise of Outcome-Based Education states that all students are capable of learning and can achieve high levels of competency when teachers specify their expectations. Central to developing these expectations, the educator must first explore questions at the heart of the purpose and process of schooling:

- What do we want students to know and to be able to do?
- How will we know that they can do it?
- What resources must be available to ensure that all students succeed?
- How do we structure and pace an instructional program that prepares all students to perform well?
- What should teachers, administrators, and parents do to ensure appropriate opportunities for all students?

Educators must keep in mind that implementation of OBE generally requires a restructuring of the entire educational system and consequently takes a significant period of time. Although evidence is limited, districts with more complete implementation of OBE also appear to demonstrate higher student achievement gains. For many school districts, OBE has been a refreshing source of empowerment for teachers and administrators, and has added a sense of direction to curriculum-building and staff development.

Concerns about Outcome-Based Education

At its most basic level, then, OBE is based on the simple principle that decisions about curriculum and instruction should be driven by the outcomes educators would like to achieve. This premise may at first seem straightforward and unarguable. However, one issue OBE advocates have struggled with is whether one set of outcomes will fit the needs of all students, students who may have widely varied abilities and cultural and family backgrounds. In attempting to meet such a diversity of needs, sometimes contradictory outcomes have resulted. This has concerned some parents (especially of high-achieving students) who fear the overall curriculum will be compromised.

Another concern about OBE implementation is that of time allotment. Without time constraints, students master subject matter at their own level of competency and do not go on to more complicated assignments until they have achieved mastery in a given field. Instructional levels are determined after initial assessment of student mastery, and learning time is varied according to the needs of each individual student. Thus, one implication of OBE that schools must deal with is that students start and end outcome sets at different times. A transition to flexible scheduling within a traditional curriculum is a necessary step for OBE school districts to take.

Assessment is also a critical issue with OBE implementation. Educators need to understand the place for different kinds of performance assessment, and determine when to use which kind of assessment. Teachers must strive to invent assessments that are likely to improve performance. These forms of assessment may have to be newly developed by the teacher, and may be unusual or uncomfortable for both teacher and students at first. In addition, students must be trained to see assessment not as judgment on themselves or their abilities, but instead an opportunity to enhance their learning, whether that assessment be through portfolio assessment or demonstrations in the arts and sciences. Instructionally sound assessment enhances the opportunities for staff and students to learn together.

Some critics of OBE claim that, because of the need for new forms of assessment with OBE, that OBE-taught students may not succeed on traditional assessment tools such as standardized tests. Because high scores on standardized tests such as the CAT and SAT are valued highly in the worlds of work and academia, educators must deal with this issue.

The aspect of OBE that has gained the most media attention is the assertion that some OBE plans teach students values rather than basic skills and knowledge. Many traditionalist or fundamentalist Christian groups have been particularly outspoken on this issue. These groups often object to affective (rather than cognitive) emphases in content-area courses, and they allege that students are being "indoctrinated" by outcomes implicitly or explicitly related to specific social, political and economic values. Better communication between these parents and educators, in particular during the designing of outcomes and assessment of these outcomes, is necessary if OBE is to continue in the school system. It can be argued that all schools have outcomes, whether by design or not. A school that does not specify desired outcomes simply accepts whatever outcomes result from the current educational processes. The current push for greater accountability from the public schools seems to suggest that this is not the road to take.

A final concern that many educators have with OBE is that the research behind it is inconclusive. One problem is that many schools claiming to practice OBE appear to offer the same sort of courses as before, and have simply drafted outcomes that echoed previous, unwritten outcomes. Other school systems have adopted OBE only on a limited basis, perhaps in one selected school or in a few independent classrooms. OBE implementation, if it is to be effective, must result in a thorough redesign of the school curriculum and needs to be system-wide.

Conclusion

Some necessary steps that school districts implementing Outcome-Based Education need to take are as follows:

- Develop a strategy and implement it
- Provide teacher training and released time for planning by teachers
- Have local, state, and federal policymakers become effective partners
- Concentrate on improving learning for all children
- Identify ways to describe students' progress so the public can see it
- Be prepared for controversy

Students, parents, and educators all have the right to expect the highest standards of academic achievement from their schools. The entire community should decide the standards by which schools or students must be held accountable. Here the onus falls upon administrators to ensure that agreed-upon criteria are accomplished through district-level curriculum planning, released time for teachers, increased staff development, and in other ways. There is no one model of OBE that is ideal for every school district, and the public needs to become aware that Outcome-Based Education is a process, and not a standard, fixed program.

OUTCOMES

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It's Time to Take a Close Look at Outcome–Based Education

William G. Spady

Interest in Outcome–Based Education (OBE) is growing at an astounding rate in all parts of the U.S. From state capitals to local district board rooms, to classrooms, to student counseling offices, the term "student outcomes" is now a part of the common language of our system. And, like smoke and fire, when you hear the word "Outcomes" you usually hear "Based" at the same time.

As a person responsible for both coining the term "Outcome–Based" and for promoting its authentic use in school districts throughout North America over the past twenty years (please see all of the citations at the end of this paper), I can guarantee three things:

1. The real meaning of the term Outcome-Based is far different from the way most people think of it;

2. The term itself, along with the rapidly growing movement that surrounds it, has evolved rather dramatically in the last several years; and

3. The authentic meaning of the term has tremendous implications for the complete transformation of our educational system.

Let's examine these points one at a time.

THE REAL MEANING OF "OUTCOME-BASED"

The terms Outcome-Based and Outcome-Based Education are easy to explain, but they are not easy to translate into our current system because it is *Based* on something entirely different from outcomes, and the two don't mix. Consider these basic points.

First, an outcome is a demonstration of learning that occurs at the END of a learning experience. It is a result of learning and an actual visible, observable demonstration of three things: knowledge, combined with competence, combined with something my colleagues and I call "orientations"—the attitudinal, affective, motivational, and relational elements that also make up a performance. Further, this demonstration happens in a real live setting, and is, therefore, influenced and defined by the elements and factors that make up that setting, situation, or context.

Although we tend to take for granted that the school classroom is the predominant setting for learning outcomes, most other settings put learning to a much stronger test because the performances required are more complex and subject to much more variability. For example, a typical exercise in a social studies class would involve the students in learning about the functions of their local government, the bureaus or departments that provide particular services, and the procedures to follow to get information or help from those agencies. The conventional demonstration of that learning would be to answer questions on an examination or to write a paper describing those governmental structures and services. However, the "authentic life-context demonstration" of the same learning was played out in an Arizona high school classroom recently, when the students took all of that information, designed the renovation of a city park that met all local ordinances, and got the city council to approve and implement the design.

So, if we were to start our definition of Outcome-Based with these basic elements in mind, we would see that: l) an outcome is, in fact, a CULMINATING DEMONSTRATION of the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities that underlie it, and 2) it occurs in a PERFORMANCE CONTEXT that directly influences what it is and how it is carried out. These defining elements clearly tell us that an outcome is not simply the name of the learning content, or the name of a concept, or the name of a competence, or a grade or test SCORE, but an ACTUAL DEMONSTRATION in an AUTHENTIC CONTEXT.

Second, the term Based means to define, direct, derive, determine, focus, and organize what we do according to the substance and nature of the learning result that we want to have happen at the end. In other words, to BASE things on outcomes we would start at the end point—with our INTENDED OUTCOME—and define, derive, develop, and organize all of our curriculum designing and instructional planning, teaching, assessing, and advancement of students on that desired demonstration. Veteran OBE practitioners call this the DESIGN DOWN or "design back from the end" process, and in strong OBE schools you often hear the saying: "Design down from where you want to end up." So, when we put these two words together, the term Outcome–Based implies that we will design and organize everything we do directly around the intended learning demonstration we want to see at the end. Other than needing to get clear about what is meant by "the end," the concept is quite straight forward and makes a lot of sense to most educators once they have some practical experience with it.

Complicating Factors

But there are two major complicating factors that must be considered here, because they make the actual implementation of this otherwise straightforward idea very complex. The first factor is that the word Based also carries a motivational and philosophical intent: WANTING THE OUTCOME TO HAPPEN—for ALL students! We BASE things on the outcome SO THAT the outcome will actually occur, for EVERYONE. In other words, Outcome-Based also means "Success-Based," and it directly implies that bell-curve thinking, quotas, and comparative grading distributions and standard systems have to be abandoned in favor of what is widely known as "criterion-based" systems. That is extraordinarily difficult to do in a school, district, or educational system devoted to bell-curve assumptions and methods.

What makes implementing OBE even more problematic is the second complicating factor: the totally TIME–BASED nature of our existing educational system in all of its organizational and procedural aspects. When you step back and really come to grips with this issue, you find it almost impossible to identify organizational or procedural features of our system that are not both DEFINED BY and REGULATED BY the CALENDAR and the CLOCK. School buildings, school years, semesters, grading periods, courses, grade levels, Carnegie Units of

Outcome–Based

defined

outcome – A culminating demonstration of the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities that underlie it in a performance context that directly influences what and how it is carried out.

based – To base curriculum designing and instructional planning, teaching, assessing, and advancement of students on a desired demonstration.

outcome–based, *syn. success–based.* To design and organize all curriculum and instructional planning, teaching, assessing, and advancement of students around successful learning demonstrations for all students.

credit, promotion, retention, school entry, graduation, curriculum organization, testing programs, and staff contracts are all defined and driven by the calendar.

In a time-based system like ours, the calendar and clock—not student learning results—are the controlling factors in how things are organized and operate. This makes the word "when" the most powerful thing in running our system. The bottom line of this reality looks as follows: WHEN students are supposed to do something is fixed by the calendar and schedule and takes precedence over WHETHER they do it successfully. Add to this the fact that the bell-curve can only accommodate success for some students anyway, and you can see that our system has no way to give WHETHER students can demonstrate outcomes successfully equal status with WHEN they must do the demonstrating. However, the "success for all" intention of OBE implies just the opposite: namely, that WHETHER students learn important things successfully is more important than the day of the year or the hour of the day that it happens.

When stated in a slightly different way, this dilemma can be seen as a tension between ends and means, with time, programs, courses, and procedures as means and with intended outcomes as ends. In this light we can further see how tightly coupled our system is to a whole constellation of means, and how loosely coupled it is to all those things that signify ends, such as outcomes, learning, standards, and achievement.

So the issue is joined and the widespread mis–use of the term Outcome-Based can be readily understood. The term Outcome–Based is generally not being used appropriately throughout our educational system because we have not collectively stopped to examine what it would really mean to BASE our system on intended outcomes for all students rather than on how long the educational process has been defined to last or how its curriculum and delivery structures are already organized. As a result, in the name of OBE, educators and policy makers mistakenly:

1. Write outcomes about existing curricula instead of designing curricula that facilitate intended outcomes;

2. Tie outcome performance directly to the calendar at all levels of the system;

3. Equate time–based standardized testing systems and results with intended instructional outcomes;

4. Confuse specific, step-by-step instructional objectives with culminating outcomes of significance; and otherwise

5. Refer to everything that has anything to do with learning outcomes as Outcome–Based, no matter how time–based or curriculum–based it is.

Why? Because: 1) the words Outcomes and Based are not well understood, either separately or together; 2) the term Outcome–Based has become familiar and seems natural to use whenever the issue of student outcomes arises; 3) it is easy to assume that anything that involves outcomes is, therefore, Outcome-Based; and 4) the real meaning and implication of the OBE concept are not well understood in their own right because few of us have had the time or opportunity to reflect seriously on or question the time– based character of our educational system—in part because it is the only form of education that any of us has ever known. Therefore, it is easy to assume that Outcome–Based is just another variation on how our schools have always been.

> “*WHEN students are supposed to do something is fixed by the calendar and schedule and takes precedence over WHETHER they do it successfully.*”

> “*Add to this the fact that the bell-curve can only accommodate success for some students anyway, and you can see that our system has no way to give WHETHER students can demonstrate outcomes successfully equal status with WHEN they must do the demonstrating.*”

THE EVOLUTION OF THE OUTCOME-BASED CONCEPT

Although Outcome–Based models have been around for centuries in the form of craft guilds, apprenticeship programs, military and business training, scouting, parenting, and even "alternative high schools," its presence in our current schools has evolved out of the theoretical and applied research of John Carroll (1963) and Benjamin Bloom (1968).

In both cases, Carroll and Bloom encouraged educators to stop using time as if it were an inflexible definer of learning conditions and instead use it as an alterable resource, based on the differing learning rates and needs of students. They also both advocated the use of what we today call criterion standards of performance—that is, standards that define the substance of what is to be learned and demonstrated rather than on the distribution of student scores, percentiles, or comparative performances. Their models set criterion–based performance standards identically for all students, and allowed the time needed to reach that standard to vary. What we know as Mastery Learning, Competency-Based Education, and Outcome-Based Education all share these two defining features.

If these ideas have been around since the late Sixties and it has only been recently that they seem to have caught on in a major way, what took so long for the educational community to discover and embrace them?

Three factors seem to have been at work. First, until the middle Eighties, the public education system of the U.S. was relatively immune from threat. Certainly, every decade in this century has had its reports, severe critics, and serious reformers, but the system itself was seen as providing more opportunity for a greater percentage of the population than any other system on the globe. Whether this is all myth or truth is not the issue. The issue is that the public system in particular did not have to improve in order to survive, and it certainly was under no pressure to change its entire basis of functioning.

But that, as you know, has changed dramatically during the last decade. The system has been under steady attack from both the corporate community and very conservative members of the public and is facing the imminent threat of having its monopoly on tax revenues removed, and private alternatives subsidized.

Second, the basis of this open attack has been low-quality outcomes. Students entering college and/or the work force do not seem to be equipped to deal with the heightened demands of a high-technology, rapidly changing, highly competitive market place. Improving and documenting student outcomes has been the focal point of major policy initiatives in almost every state capitol and in Washington.

Third, the word is finally out, thanks to the visibility given to some of the significant pioneering OBE efforts of the past decade: OUTCOME–BASED EDUCATION IS POWERFUL, AND ITS LEADING PRACTITIONERS ARE ACHIEVING SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE, if not astonishing, RESULTS.

The convergence of these three factors has led to tremendous interest in OBE among state departments of education and local districts from coast to coast. But those seeking information on what OBE means and how to do it are seeing highly diverse and even contradictory examples of what it is, can be, and should be.

In recognition of that fact, my colleague Kit Marshall and I wrote a paper that was pub-

"*Although Outcome–Based models have been around for centuries in the form of craft guilds, apprenticeship programs, military and business training, scouting, parenting, and even "alternative high schools," its presence in our current schools has evolved out of the theoretical and applied research of John Carroll (1963) and Benjamin Bloom (1968).*"

> “***Traditional approaches to OBE*** *attempt to bring the clear criterion and flexible time principles developed by Carroll and Bloom into time-based, means-based schools without altering the structure of either the curriculum or the school.*”

> “*…****Transitional OBE*** *lies between Traditional and Transformational in scope and purpose.*”

lished in the October, 1991 issue of *Educational Leadership* entitled "Beyond Traditional Outcome–Based Education." The paper offered a very brief analysis, with examples, of what seem today to be the three main trends in Outcome–Based design and delivery models. We have given these trends the names Traditional OBE, Transitional OBE, and Transformational OBE.

What these three distinctive approaches to OBE reflect, I believe, is a decided evolution in the understanding and application of the two key factors identified by Carroll and Bloom: time and outcomes. This evolution has played itself out over the past twenty years and can be characterized by an expansion, from micro to increasingly macro, of what outcomes are; how they drive different conceptions of curriculum, assessment, and student credentialing; how schools define and organize time and opportunity for pursuing them; and how curriculum, instructional delivery patterns, and performance contexts need to be restructured to achieve outcomes of different kinds. What follows is a thumbnail sketch of each of the three trends.

Traditional OBE

Traditional approaches to OBE attempt to bring the clear criterion and flexible time principles developed by Carroll and Bloom into time-based, means–based schools without altering the structure of either the curriculum or the school. They have been the standard model of OBE for over twenty years. In most of these models, outcomes in the form of fairly micro–instructional objectives are derived from existing curricular programs, courses, and units, and their focus is subject matter content mastery. Time flexibility takes the form of giving students some form of second chance to improve their initial performance on an assignment or test of record, usually within the constraints of a given marking period, in order to reach a "mastery" standard.

The basic purpose of Traditional OBE is to improve individual teacher effectiveness (either in self–contained classrooms or in grade–level or subject–similar teams) and to increase the percentage of students doing well on conventional measures of achievement, such as test scores and grades, which almost always occurs. The performance context is the individual classroom; and curriculum organization and delivery are defined and constrained by the calendar. While the organizational form of the school changes little, a new philosophy and culture of success usually infuses departments and whole schools.

Transitional OBE

As the name implies, Transitional OBE lies between Traditional and Transformational in scope and purpose. The key differences lie in the conception of what is an outcome, what is the culmination point of that outcome, how should curriculum be designed to support those outcomes, how can time and opportunities be organized to appropriately foster those outcomes, and what form delivery, assessment, and credentialing and reporting systems should take to reflect those outcomes.

At issue is a fundamentally different conception of outcomes that began to emerge in the early Eighties: outcomes that reflect generic, higher-order competencies of students—competencies that cut across subject matter lines, open doors to interdisciplinary curriculum designs and teaching approaches, and redefine both the meaning of "authentic assessment" and notions of an outcome being a culminating demonstration of learning. In particular, a new term, "Exit Outcomes," denoting the culminating outcomes for students as they graduate and exit the system, takes on special significance as the core basis of curriculum design for all grades and subject areas.

Transitional OBE extends far beyond Traditional OBE in the way it redefines the role of subject matter content in the curriculum design and instructional processes. Exit Outcomes on higher-order competencies replace subject content mastery as the definition of outcomes and achievement, and subject content takes on the role of being a vehicle to assist in the cultivation and integration of these higher-order competencies—things such as critical thinking, problem solving, and effective communication skills. When outcomes of this sort are used as the fundamental purposes of the instructional process, subject matter tests and factual recall fade into the background as indicators of student success, as does grading based on the averaging of many disparate assignments and tests over a fixed period of time. This shift in the meaning of outcomes also creates incentives and opportunities for interdisciplinary, cross-grade curriculum designs, assessment centers, and teaching arrangements which are not typically found in Traditional OBE approaches.

Transformational OBE

Here too the name says it all. The language and thinking that now constitute what we call Transformational OBE began to emerge about six years ago. The most recent implementers of this approach are stepping outside of the given frameworks and structures of traditional schooling and asking fundamental questions about the purpose of the educational system, what it should be preparing students for, and how it is structured to accomplish those broader ends. There are three keys to this approach: l) a process of strategic planning and design which examines the conditions our current students are likely to face in the future as they carry out adult life–role responsibilities; 2) deriving from those conditions a set of Exit Outcomes that embody the complex role performances that will be required of them in those future contexts; and 3) deriving from those Exit Outcomes the learning experiences, processes, and contexts that will directly facilitate their accomplishment.

What this all means, briefly, is that none of the prevalent features, programs, and structures of schooling are assumed to be inherently appropriate or useful if they do not directly support the Exit Outcomes that a district defines. Parents, educators, policy makers, and students are going back to ground zero to design what needs to be in place in order to accomplish these complex role performance outcomes, and what existing things need to be modified or abandoned. Obviously this opens the door to profound changes in how people view and design curriculum, instructional processes, assessment and evaluation tools, appropriate contexts for learning, when the learning should occur, and who should be involved in the teaching and learning process.

In particular, implementers of Transformational OBE recognize an inherent mismatch between the inherently inter– and transdisciplinary, complex life–role performances they are trying to achieve for students and the segregated subject structure of our current curriculum. They also question: 1) whether the classroom and school building are adequate settings for developing and assessing these role perform-

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ances; 2) whether the existing grading, credit, promotion, and graduation systems make any sense if a district's ultimate goal for students is their culminating performance on Exit Outcomes; and 3) whether teachers alone should be the instructional agents used to teach critical role-performance competencies that the school has traditionally never addressed.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF OBE FOR OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Clearly the previous section suggests that the implications which the widespread interest in OBE might have on the educational system in the U.S. are going to depend a lot on which of the three approaches to OBE ultimately responds to the needs of our society. Traditional OBE will mean the least change in prevailing patterns and processes because both the system's curriculum and organizational structures will remain largely in tact even though internal operations would change significantly. Transitional OBE will stretch those organizational structures more, but not enough to make the school an unfamiliar place. But Transformational OBE implies a fundamental redefinition of the form that schooling takes, the things it attempts to accomplish, and the symbols of what the institution represents.

Which direction various states and districts go will depend, I believe, on two primary factors: l) the degree of pressure schools face for preparing youngsters for a future that looks to be markedly different from the past; and 2) the role the university continues to play as a gatekeeper to occupational and economic status in our society and a definer of appropriate curriculum knowledge . If future-oriented thinking and policy making prevail, and the schooling experience gets defined as preparation for life rather than preparation for more schooling, then models of Transformational OBE will come to the fore, and traditional curriculum frameworks, content, and delivery systems will be significantly modified over time. But if the purpose of schooling continues to be defined as preparation for more schooling in the traditional content areas, then Traditional OBE and the preservation of existing content and delivery structures will emerge as the dominant pattern of OBE implementation.

However, if the latter occurs and schools retain their overall structure, how they operate is bound to be different along several key dimensions. These differences directly reflect the paradigm shifts inherent in the implementation of any authentic OBE model, regardless of approach.

1. Decisions, results, and programs will no longer be defined by and limited to specific time blocks and calendar dates. Things will simply be less time-based than they now are. Students of different ages will learn side-by-side in more flexible delivery systems than we have seen in most schools.

2. Grading and credentialing will be much more criterion-based and will focus on what students can eventually learn to do well rather than on how well they do the first time they encounter something. Averaging systems and comparative grading will disappear as the concept of culminating achievement takes hold.

3. There will be a much greater emphasis on collaborative models of student learning and much less interstudent competition for grades and credentials. The "success for all" principles of OBE will prevail because they are so powerful and so badly needed.

4. Traditional curriculum struc-

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tures will, in fact, be modified significantly as the system develops the capacity to respond to differences in student needs and learning rates while at the same time helping them accomplish high level outcomes of significance. Not all "courses" will be nine months in length, nor will "passing" require that a given amount of time be spent attending a particular class.

5. Teachers will be much more focused on the learning capabilities of their students and far less on covering a given amount of curriculum in a given time block. At the same time, textbooks will be replaced by intended outcomes of significance as the driving force in curriculum design and delivery, rather than the other way around.

6. Curriculum tracking will disappear, and all instruction will ultimately focus on higher level learning and competencies for all students. The instructional methods and materials used in gifted and talented programs will be accessible to all students.

7. There will be far less reliance on norm–referenced standardized tests as indicators of either student or teacher accomplishment. Districts will custom–design criterion-based assessment measures that directly operationalize the outcomes they define as most significant. No national or state assessment system will ever be adequate for measuring all of the authentic outcomes of significance that local districts will want to foster. With major changes such as these on the horizon, it behooves all educators to inquire seriously into the possibilities inherent in authentic Outcome–Based models—especially when they are not encumbered by time–based, means–based assumptions and practices.

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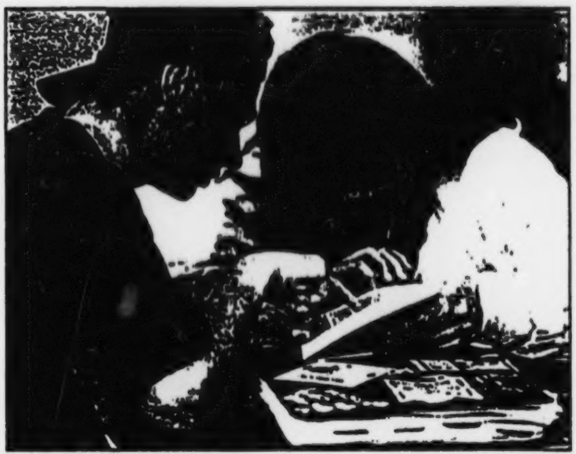
Choosing Outcomes of Significance

William G. Spady

By defining various levels of outcomes, the Demonstration Mountain provides educators with a model for moving from teaching simple classroom skills to exemplifying life performance roles.

The term *outcomes* has come of age. Reformers from coast to coast agree that measures other than student grades and Carnegie units must be used for determining student and district achievement. But what outcomes *are* and what kinds should be expected of high school graduates are still disputed. Determining what students in the '90s need to learn and successfully demonstrate is further complicated by the emerging work on national standards, authentic tasks, and portfolio assessments.



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The overriding issue affecting the development and implementation of outcomes today is *significance.* Do the outcomes we expect students to demonstrate matter in the long run— in life after formal schooling? This issue has stimulated a dramatic evolution in approaches to outcome-based education at the local level since the mid-1980s. In its simplest form, this evolution has been a shift away from small, relatively simple curriculum-focused segments of learning to much more complex and comprehensive learning experiences focused on life roles, which I call *role performances.* Why? Because evidence overwhelmingly shows that much classroom learning never makes it out the door, either into other classrooms or into the world beyond the school.

What Is an Outcome?

Before leaping into a discussion of role performances, we need to establish what outcomes are and aren't. Outcomes are high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context. *Demonstration* is the key word; an outcome is not a score or a grade, but the end product of a clearly defined process that students carry out.

First, the demonstration must be *high quality,* which, at a minimum, means thorough and complete. (This criterion calls into question conventional grading practices that accept and label all student performances, whether complete or not.)

Second, the demonstration comes at the *culminating* point of the student's learning experiences, literally "at or after the end"—not "during the experience" as most people seem to assume. The term *exit outcomes* has emerged for those outcomes that occur at the close of a student's academic career, and students in more advanced outcome-based districts are going to be expected to demonstrate significant, high-quality learning with that ultimate culminating point in mind.

Third, the demonstration must show *significant learning;* significant content is essential. Content alone, however, cannot be an outcome because it is inherently inert. Much like potential energy, it must be manifested through a demonstration process.

Finally, all demonstrations of learning occur in some *context* or performance setting. The conditions

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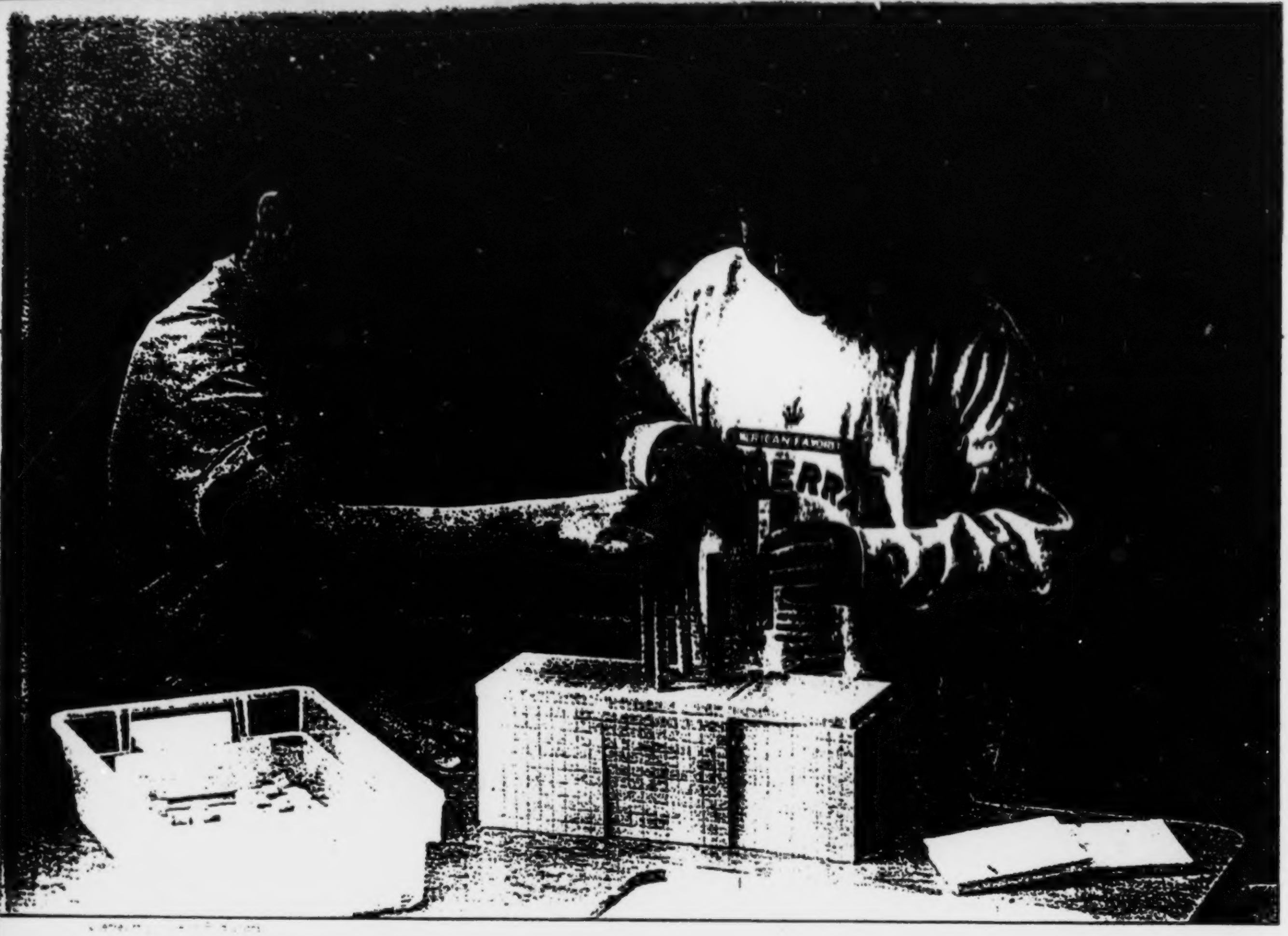

and circumstances students face when performing affect what they need to know, do, and be like in order to succeed, quite apart from the cognitive, technical, or interpersonal nature of the task itself. We need only consider the difference between in-seat classroom demonstrations and public, on-stage performances to recognize how important this factor can be.

The Demonstration Mountain

The metaphor that we use in the High Success Network to explain differences in learning outcomes is the Demonstration Mountain. The mountain represents the act of climbing from basic demonstrations of classroom learning up to demonstrations that involve living effectively in the face of real-world challenges at home, at work, and in the community. One version of the mountain is shown in Figure 1.

The mountain consists of three major zones and six different forms of learning demonstrations. The complexity, generalizability, and significance of each form of demonstration increase as we climb from the lowest level to the highest. Also increasing as we move up the mountain are the ownership, self-direction, and self-assessment that students must apply to a demonstration.

The least complex forms of demonstrations fall in the Traditional Zone and are grounded primarily in subject matter content. These forms and their classroom context are relatively simple and limited to traditional subject categories. Because of their strong content grounding, these demonstrations are not generalizable across other areas of the curriculum or other performance contexts; school is the only place where they are typically performed.

Midway up the mountain lies the Transitional Zone, in which demonstrations are relatively complex and grounded in the kinds of competence that transcend given subject areas and that can be applied in a variety of relatively demanding performance contexts and settings. In this zone, demonstrations are generalizable across content areas and require substantial degrees of integration, synthesis, and functional application, thereby encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to developing the outcomes.

At the highest level of the mountain is the Transformational Zone. In this zone, demonstrations require the highest degrees of ownership, integration, synthesis, and functional application of prior learning because they must respond to the complexity of real-life performance contexts.

Beginning Our Climb

Within each of the three major zones on the mountain are two different levels of learning demonstrations. At the bottom in the Traditional Zone are *Discrete Content Skills*. Concrete and content-dependent, these microforms of learning demonstrations are narrow

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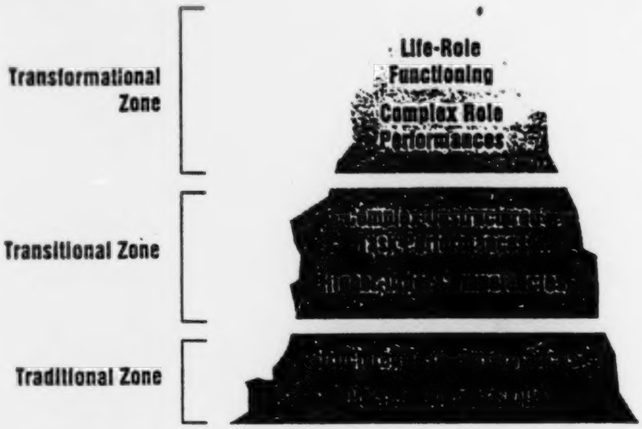
Figure 1

The Demonstration Mountain



in scope, tightly structured by the teacher, and linked to small, specific segments of curriculum content. The skills demonstrated are virtually inseparable from their content, as in reading passages for meaning, spelling specific words, carrying out specific mathematical operations, drawing particular objects, or locating specific features on a map.

While some of these Discrete Content Skills do eventually serve as enabling outcomes for demonstrations higher on the mountain, most of them are *discrete objectives*—small and detailed pieces of learning that constitute components in a larger block of curriculum content. An example of a Discrete Content Skill used by Spence Rogers of the High Success Network is:

> All students will correctly identify local government procedures for initiating new laws.

The next level of demonstrations, *Structured Task Performances*, may be the most prevalent and misinterpreted form of demonstration on the mountain. These performances include a broad range of demonstrations that vary substantially in the degree of mental processing required for their execution. Examples include: writing a paper explaining a specific topic; carrying out a laboratory experiment and comparing its results with established theory; or drawing a map of a region at a specific point in history and contrasting it with a contemporary map of the same region.

These Structured Task Performances represent most day-to-day classroom activities, homework assignments, and work tasks. They typically involve completing a series of steps that the teacher has defined (hence, the term *structured*), and they use Discrete Content Skills as performance enablers. In most cases, adding to the number of steps required in a Structured Task Performance does not change the nature of this form of demonstration, though it may make its execution more difficult. An example from Rogers for this level is:

> All students will conduct a research project on methods of initiating new laws at the local level and present their findings to the class and/or to their parents.

Midway Up the Mountain

Climbing to the Transitional Zone of the mountain, we encounter *Higher-Order Competencies.* Higher-Order Competencies include analyzing concepts and their interrelations; proposing solutions to multifaceted problems; using complex arrays of data and information to make decisions; planning complex structures, processes, or events; and communicating effectively with public audiences. All of these demonstrations can involve many kinds of content. Although they are more generalizable across different kinds of subject areas and performance contexts than outcomes in the Traditional Zone, they do rely on some Content Skills and Structured Tasks as enablers. The example from Rogers for this kind of demonstration is:

> All students will teach an adult civic group how to initiate new laws in the community.

In the next level of demonstration, *Complex Unstructured Task Performances*, personal ownership, self-direction, and self-assessment intensifies. Students create their own projects, defining the parameters, criteria, standards, and modes of execution and evaluation. These are the broad, complex demonstrations one finds in independent research and high-level applied projects, and they frequently require the integration of knowledge from many different sources and disciplines. At their core, Complex Unstructured Task Performances embody what Theodore Sizer characterizes as significant "exhibitions" of learning (1983, 1984). Almost by definition, these demonstrations involve much higher degrees of latitude and independence than in the Traditional Zone of the mountain. An example of a Complex Unstructured Task Performance is:

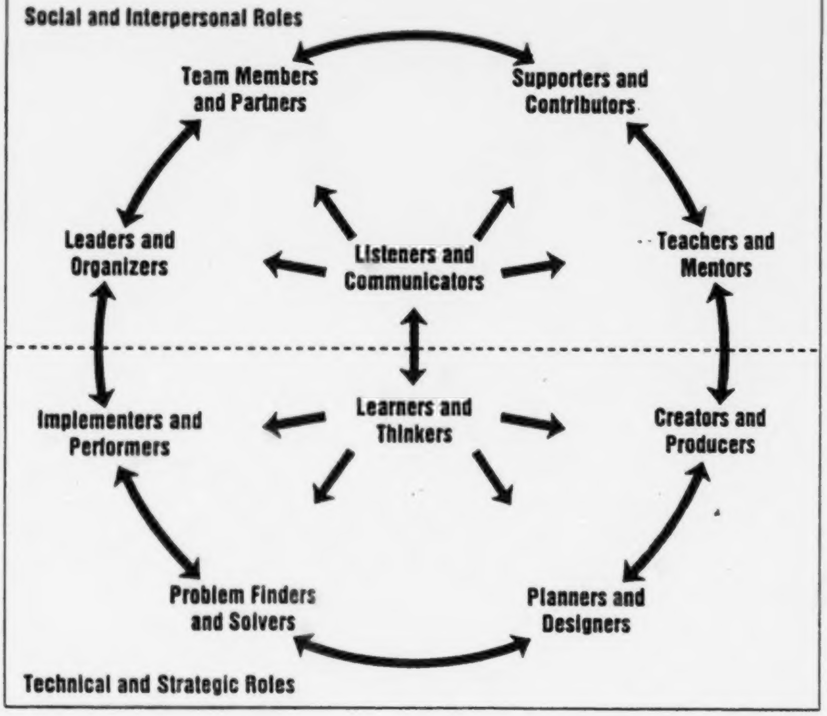
> All students will design and carry out a project on a major issue or problem that uses data to heighten community awareness and proposes feasible ways to address it by initiating new laws.

Heading Toward the Top

To enter the Transformational Zone of the mountain is to depart from the formal curriculum and its content categories as the starting point and purpose of learning. Here we enter the

Figure 2

Fundamental Life Performance Roles


Social and Interpersonal Roles
Team Members and Partners
Supporters and Contributors
Leaders and Organizers
Listeners and Communicators
Teachers and Mentors
Implementers and Performers
Learners and Thinkers
Creators and Producers
Problem Finders and Solvers
Planners and Designers
Technical and Strategic Roles

realm of Role Performances. Operating with authentic life contexts as the backdrop, students demonstrate what real people do to be successful *on a continuing basis* in their career, family, and community. Almost all real-life role performances require complex applications of many kinds of knowledge and all kinds of competence as people confront the challenges surrounding them in their social systems.

Grounded in these real-world contexts are *Complex Role Performances.* These performances occur and recur as people carry out their responsibilities; they involve a high degree of generalizability across time and situations; and they demand a high degree of ownership, self-direction, and self-assessment on the part of their practitioners. Complex Role Performers have the motivation and commitment to continually carry out their role responsibilities, not just perform isolated tasks on demand.

Because this zone of the mountain seems to lie beyond the structures and frames of reference used most often in schools, we might ask two questions: Are Complex Role Performances possible in school? What Role Performances link the world of schooling to real life? Figure 2 sets forth 10 Fundamental Life Performance Roles that will help us answer these questions. The figure can also serve as a template for implementing transformational outcome-based education (Spady 1991, 1992; Brandt 1992/1993).

The framework shown in Figure 2 outlines 10 clusters of performance roles that are essential to almost all of the major life roles students will face once they leave school—citizen, employer, worker, parent, and civic leader. Consistent with the SCANS Report of 1991, which has been used to shape the outcome frameworks for the states of Florida and Oregon, Figure 2 serves as a design template for many districts throughout Canada and the United States. The bottom section of the framework deals with technical and strategic Life Performance Roles, while the top contains social and interpersonal roles. All of these roles can be carried out in Transformational classrooms just as they can in authentic life contexts. An example of such a demonstration is:

> All students will organize and participate in a community service team that monitors major community issues and problems, develops alternatives—including proposed changes in laws—for addressing them, and explains potential solutions to key community groups.

Working with students on a continuous basis, schools can prepare them to be:

■ *Implementers and Performers,* who can apply basic and advanced ideas, information, skills, tools, and technologies as they carry out the responsibilities associated with all life roles. They grasp the demands of a particular situation and use available resources to get things done.

■ *Problem Finders and Solvers,* who can anticipate, explore, analyze, and resolve problems, examining underlying causes from a variety of perspectives and developing potential solutions.

■ *Planners and Designers,* who develop effective methods and strategies for resolving issues and problems.

■ *Creators and Producers,* who seek new possibilities for understanding or doing things and who transform those possibilities into original, workable products or processes that change the operating environment.

■ *Learners and Thinkers,* who develop and use cognitive tools and strategies to translate new information and experiences into sound action, and who use their repertoire of knowledge and strategies to extend their capacities for successful action by assimilating, analyzing, and synthesizing new experiences.

■ *Listeners and Communicators,* who can grasp and express ideas, information, intention, feeling, and concern for others in ways that are clearly understood and appreciated. They accurately comprehend and use words, pictures, gestures, deeds, styles, symbols, and mannerisms to receive and convey thoughts.

- *Teachers and Mentors*, who can enhance the thinking, skills, performance orientations, and motivation of others through the explanations they provide, the counsel they give, and the example they set. They share the information, time, perspectives, and skills at their disposal.
- *Supporters and Contributors*, who invest time and resources to improve the quality of life of those around them.
- *Team Members and Partners*, who contribute their best efforts to collaborative endeavors and who seek agreement on goals, procedures, responsibilities, and rewards, setting aside personal preferences in order to accomplish mutual aims.
- *Leaders and Organizers*, who can initiate, coordinate, and facilitate the accomplishment of collective tasks by perceiving and defining intended results, determining how they might be accomplished, anticipating roadblocks, and enlisting and supporting the participation of others to achieve the results.

If preparing students for this constellation of 10 Life Performance Roles looks like a major expansion of the school's vision and priorities beyond the practices of the Traditional and Transitional Zones of the mountain, *it is*. To provide this level of learning will require a transformation of what schools are and how they spend their time. But our young people deserve the significant learning experiences and capabilities that the Life Performance Roles represent.

The learning environments that continuously involve students in all 10 [illegible]s of Performance Roles are not impossible to conceive, design, and implement. The key is to continually engage students in both individual and team activities that explore important issues or phenomena, use multiple media and technologies, create products that embody the results of students' explorations, and call for students to explain their work and products to adult and student audiences. In short, the classroom becomes an active, high-challenge learning environment and performance center.

The question that remains, however, is whether schools can address and support the *Life-Role Functioning* outcomes at the top of the Transformational Zone. Can students carry out the requirements of adult citizens, workers, employers, and parents while still young and in school? To say no is easy; performances at that level require that people be in those life-roles and deal with the conditions and challenges that they encounter in those real-life contexts.

On the other hand, states and districts can design learning experiences and performances that can serve as exit outcomes based on the realities faced by today's adults and on the realities that we anticipate will face the adults of tomorrow. These performances can be simulated in both typical educational settings and in the real-world contexts with which schools are connecting more and more through business partnerships and service learning programs. Frameworks like those in Figure 2 can serve as guides.

If schools can't guarantee successful Life-Role Functioning, they can come close by helping students become competent Complex Role Performers with extensive experiences drawn from real-life contexts. Accomplishing this will make the climb up the Demonstration Mountain both compelling and rewarding for schools, their students, and their communities. ■

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THE OBE BULLETIN

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A Regional Newsletter About Outcome-Based Education

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Curriculum organization is a fundamental district and school activity in implementing outcome-based education. Because it can consume considerable energy, it is important that districts and schools address issues of curriculum organization efficiently and not impede the implementation of other components of outcome-based education. This OBE Bulletin discusses the concept of curriculum organization in outcome-based education and suggests ways that may help a school or district complete this activity.

CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION IN OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION

Specifying learning outcomes is the starting point for curriculum organization in outcome-based education. Clearly defined, publicly-stated outcomes provide the focus for districts and schools to structure their curriculum. Although most districts have philosophy statements and scope and sequence materials as policy documents, in many cases they do not provide the necessary structure for the curriculum nor do they provide an adequate guide for teachers to plan instruction. Consequently, teachers resort to using what is available and useful to them, namely textbook objectives, textbook sequence, and textbook tests.

Defining useable learning outcomes, then, is a critical first activity. Once learning outcomes are outlined and organized, the next activity is to *adopt or develop* appropriate curriculum materials for those outcomes. It is easy to rely on textbooks to define curriculum. The real challenge is to go beyond the textbook and organize curriculum materials into learning units. Learning units outline topics for several weeks of instruction and specify ways the topics can be taught. Learning units are working documents that, in effect, collect the best pedagogical knowledge available in a school or district.

The third activity is to *align* the curriculum in two ways. First, the existing curriculum documents, from exit outcomes to lesson objectives, need to be consistent. Second, the curriculum should be aligned with the assessment instruments that the district uses to evaluate the effectiveness of its educational programs.

Alignment is not an easy task, primarily because there are often several sets of both curriculum documents and tests to be coordinated. For example, a district might have state frameworks and curriculum guides, its own district philosophy statements and scope and sequence documents, and textbook series to coordinate. With respect to testing, a district might be required to administer achievement tests from a state assessment program (based on a state-level framework or curriculum guide), also have a district-developed testing program (usually criterion-referenced and linked to district scope and sequence documents), and be mandated by the school board to administer a standardized achievement battery to provide state and national normative data. Figuring out what

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tests need to be aligned to which curriculum documents is often a confusing task.

A final activity is to devise a means of *managing* the curriculum. Not only does the implementation of learning units need monitoring, but formal procedures are also required for revising the curriculum based on teacher experience. As working documents, learning units should undergo revision as experience provides pedagogical knowledge about what works well with particular topics.

These four activities are discussed—defining outcomes, developing learning units, aligning curriculum, and managing the curriculum—in the remainder of this issue. A word of caution to readers: These four activities are not a recipe and do not include all the steps that a school or district might follow to organize their curriculum. This outline serves only as a map that can help guide one through the complexities of curriculum organization. The primary aim is to connect the general educational goals for students expressed in district and school philosophy and exit outcomes to the daily lessons students experience. We believe these four activities begin to accomplish this goal.

The primary aim is to connect the general educational goals for students expressed in district and school philosophy and exit outcomes to the daily lessons students experience.

Figure 1
General Learner Outcomes for Township High School District 214

District 214 graduates will demonstrate:

☐ Verbal, quantitative, and technological literacy
☐ Skills in communication and group interaction
☐ Skills in problemsolving and group interaction
☐ Skills in expressing themselves creatively and responding to the creative works of others
☐ Civic understanding through the study of American culture and history
☐ Understanding of past and present culture
☐ Concern, tolerance and respect for others
☐ Skills in adapting to and creating personal and social change
☐ Capacity for enhancing and sustaining self-esteem through emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being
☐ Skills necessary to be self-directed learners

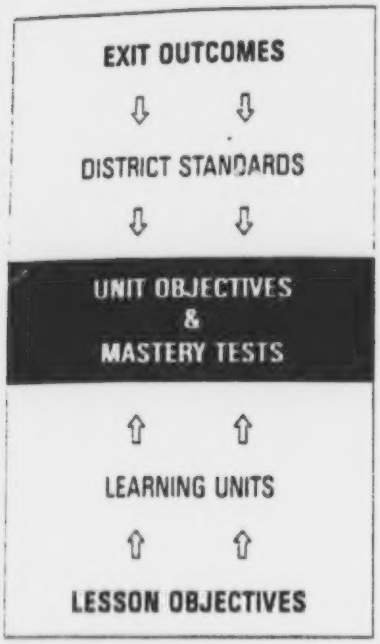
Defining Outcomes

Learning outcomes can be defined in several ways. At the secondary level, for example, a common organization would entail three levels: general learner outcomes, program goals, and course objectives. At the elementary level, it is common to place more emphasis on grade-level objectives. Three kinds of outcomes are defined here: exit outcomes, unit objectives, and lesson objectives. This classification distinguishes outcomes in terms of their breadth and specificity.

EXIT OUTCOMES. Exit outcomes express the broad educational goals toward which schools design their programs. Exit outcomes can be organized to correspond to the district's school organizations—for example, elementary, middle, and secondary—and usually reflect the district's philosophy about the types of learning it deems important. Such statements reflect cognitive, affective, psycho-motor and personal goals for learners. For example, Figure 1 presents the general learner outcomes for Township High School District Number 214 in the Chicago area.

The primary limitation of such statements is their generality. It is difficult to connect such statements to the day-to-day realities of classroom teaching. Teachers do not often think of exit outcomes; daily existence is caught up with subject areas—reading period is first, mathematics is second, and so on. It is important, therefore, that exit outcomes become connected to daily learning activities. District standards for subject areas is one way to help ensure that exit outcomes are addressed in each subject.

District standards define the content and cognitive processes for a subject area in a district. They help to explain and justify why topics are included in the curriculum. Subject area content is elicited by asking "What knowledge is important for students to have in this subject area?" In Red Bank Public Schools, for example, the reading language arts committee defined seven content areas: reading; literature; writing; listening and speaking; rhetoric, logic and thinking skills; media production and analysis; and study skills. Subject area processes are elicited by asking "What are the general ways knowledge in this subject is discovered?" In Red Bank again, the reading and language arts processes



are based on recent research on effective strategies for teaching and learning communication skills.

Considerable work has already been done in the area of constructing district standards. Professional societies such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Council of Teachers of English publish articles about the structure of their disciplines. Content area experts, such as professors who publish textbooks on how to teach a particular subject area, usually define a structure for subject areas. Other sources include state frameworks, like those published by the California State Department of Education, model curriculum guides, statements of philosophy and exit outcomes from other districts, and teachers. Because the structure of a discipline changes slowly, district standards may have a life of 10 to 15 years.

District standards, then, are written descriptions of the general topics in the curriculum and the cognitive processes expected of students. They specify the rationale for including the topics in the curriculum. District standards are tied to the exit outcomes, using the language the district constructed for the exit outcomes. Since they help guide the specification of unit outcomes, the district standards provide a bridge from the more general exit outcomes to the more specific unit objectives.

UNIT OBJECTIVES. Unit objectives are the learning outcomes for a particular subject. Each subject area—mathematics, reading, language arts, science, social studies, foreign language, the fine arts, physical education, vocational education, and others—has its own set of outcomes guided by district standards. Collectively, these unit outcomes are written such that their attainment provides the basis for students to acquire the appropriate content and processes of the district standards and the broader exit outcomes.

Unit objectives represent two to four weeks of instruction. They are written at a level of specificity between lesson objectives and exit outcomes. Lesson objectives are useful for daily lesson planning but too numerous for program organization, while exit outcomes are useful as general goals but too broad to design subject area curriculum. Each subject area has between 10 to 20 units for a year.

Unit objectives are relatively complex and reflect the aspects of content and process mentioned in the district standards. For example, consider the following unit objective for fourth-grade reading in Red Bank:

We will practice comprehension by applying skimming/scanning techniques, by reviewing sequencing skills and by writing summaries based on the novel, *The Summer of the Swans*. We will respond to each other's summaries by suggesting strengths and areas of improvement.

This unit objective addresses district standards in four areas: (1) reading—skimming, scanning and sequencing, (2) literature—the novel *The Summer of the Swans*, (3) writing—producing and editing summaries, and (4) communication—providing feedback on strengths and areas of improvement. This unit objective is also related specifically to exit outcomes in literacy, cultural knowledge, and attitudinal outcomes.

Unit objectives should characterize a teacher's intuitive notion of what it means to master a complex set of concepts or skills. Writing unit objectives in this way helps avoid fragmenting the curriculum into individual skills and also helps to ensure that student mastery is demonstrated by the use of several concepts or skills and not just isolated skills out of context.

Unit objectives should characterize a teacher's intuitive notion of what it means to master a complex set of concepts or skills.

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One important feature of learning units is that they organize, in one place, the best pedagogical knowledge and materials available in the district to teach the unit objective.

LESSON OBJECTIVES Lesson objectives are the objectives that make up the daily instruction of teachers. Lesson objectives guide the day-to-day teaching activities of a learning unit. Attainment of lesson objectives leads to mastery of the unit objective.

A task analysis of the unit objective will generate the lesson objectives. A task analysis is completed by asking "What component skills or concepts does a student need to possess in order to achieve the objective for the unit?" Answering this question will quickly generate the lesson objectives and suggest a likely sequence for presenting the lesson objectives during the learning unit. Although lesson objectives are important, they should not take precedence over unit objectives. Lesson objectives are best thought of as skills and concepts that enable students to master the unit objective and are necessary only in so far as they assist the student with the unit objective.

GETTING STARTED To get started in defining outcomes, three tasks are often helpful. First, establish a district committee to examine existing statements of exit outcomes and develop one of its own. This is not an easy task. Developing an exit outcome document forces a district to focus directly on the purpose and philosophy of education and to examine its own, often unspoken, assumptions about what education should be in society. It also focuses attention on the curriculum and begins to lay a foundation for future curriculum work.

Second, describe the curriculum that is currently used in the district by asking teachers to outline 10 to 20 units of instruction in each subject area. A unit of instruction can initially be defined as a chapter in the textbook or the curriculum taught between major tests. Teachers can describe each unit of instruction by giving a title to the unit, such as "America After the Civil War" or "Three-Digit Subtraction With Carrying." Teachers might also use task analysis procedures to list three to five lesson objectives students would master during the instruction. Department chairpersons on the secondary level, and grade-level leaders on the elementary level, can work together with their principals to organize and collate the instructional descriptions.

Third, form subject area committees to develop district standards. Master teachers can play a leading role in these committees. The principal might also be included on at least one subject area committee so that he or she would be familiar with the development process. Participation by principals is important because they will ultimately be responsible for assisting teachers in reaching unit objectives in all areas of instruction.

Developing Learning Units

Learning units organize two to four weeks of instruction. Although there are many ways to organize units, all mastery learning units contain five components: (1) opening lessons to set the stage for later learning, (2) initial instruction, (3) a non-graded formative test to identify masters and non-masters, (4) provisions for providing alternative learning activities for those students requiring additional instruction (non-masters) and those students requiring extension activities (masters), and (5) a second administration of a parallel mastery test.

One important feature of learning units is that they organize, in one place, the best pedagogical knowledge and materials available in the district to teach the unit objective. As teachers gain experience with a unit, the techniques that work best for particular lessons can be incorporated into the unit. One way of thinking about learning units, then, is as the written, collective intelligence of a district on teaching.

A second important feature is the formal mastery testing and correction procedures. These critical procedures provide teachers with the information necessary to target instruction effectively. While it is true that good teachers regularly monitor student learning informally and adjust their teaching accordingly, the mastery testing and correction procedures ensure that no student's progress goes unnoticed. The mastery testing process also provides data on student learning which are useful for curriculum revision.

GETTING STARTED Teachers design and develop learning units. It is important, therefore, that teachers understand the philosophy and practice of mastery learning and outcome-based education before

Table 1
Percentages of Tested Topics Covered in Each Textbook for Fourth-Grade Mathematics

Test	Textbook			
	Addison-Wesley	Holt	Houghton Mifflin	Scott, Foresman
MAT (38 topics)	32	50	40	42
Stanford (72 topics)	22	22	21	22
Iowa (66 topics)	26	29	32	26
CTBS-I (53 topics)	32	32	38	36
CTBS-II (61 topics)	28	38	38	34

Note: Adapted from Freeman, Kuhs, Porter, Floden, Schmidt, and Schwille (1983). Percentages are based on topics covered by at least 20 problems in a book.

being asked to develop units. A solid conceptual understanding is usually prerequisite to teacher commitment.

A second task is the writing of learning unit specifications. Learning unit specifications provide teachers with a model or guide for developing and organizing lessons into a unit. Specifications often include definitions and examples of different unit elements, questions to address in each unit, and suggested formats for outlining unit materials. In Red Bank, for example, the unit specifications address thirteen elements: mental set; rationale; objective; prerequisite skills; task analysis; parent activities; input; guided practice; independent practice; formative test; correctives; extensions; and mastery test.

The final task is actually writing the units. This is a difficult, time-consuming activity requiring district support for teachers in the form of release time, summer stipends, and common planning time for collegial work. Districts can also arrange to share units among themselves so that work is not duplicated. It is important to maintain realistic expectations, however. Learning unit development is a long-term activity and districts must find ways to compensate teachers for their efforts.

Aligning Curriculum

There is no doubt that the term *curriculum alignment* has come to mean different things among educators. Two interpretations of curriculum alignment that are important to curriculum organization in outcome-based education are discussed here and ways of applying them are outlined.

One interpretation of curriculum alignment is the coordination of curriculum documents. In outcome-based education, this means that exit outcomes, district standards, and unit objectives are consistent with each other. A curriculum committee needs to address the following questions:

- Do the district standards reflect the exit outcomes?
- Are the district standards comprehensive enough to include all appropriate unit objectives?
- Do the unit objectives contain the content and processes specified in the district standards?
- Do the unit objectives support the exit outcomes?

Answering these questions will likely uncover inconsistencies and holes in the curriculum documents that should be addressed. Building curriculum consistency, then, is one way of aligning curriculum.

While it is true that good teachers regularly monitor student learning informally and adjust their teaching accordingly, the mastery testing and correction procedures ensure that no student's progress goes unnoticed.

A second interpretation of curriculum alignment is "testing what is taught." Testing what is taught requires a district to use tests that closely match the curriculum that has been implemented. Analysis of commonly-used textbooks and achievement tests reveals a lack of overlap between textbooks and tests. For example, in a fourth-grade mathematics study by Donald Freeman and his colleagues at the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University, topics covered in each of four textbooks and five standardized tests were carefully examined. Table 1 presents the percentage of tested topics covered in each textbook for those topics represented by at least 20 mathematics problems in a book.

Test-textbook correspondence ranged from a low of 21 percent to a high of 50 percent. In the worst situation, a district using the Stanford Achievement Test with the Houghton Mifflin mathematics textbook, the achievement test measured only 21 percent of the topics covered in the textbook. Even in the best situation, a district using the Metropolitan Achievement Tests with the Holt mathematics textbook, the achievement test still only measured 50 percent of the topics covered in the textbook.

Clearly a school or district's test results are dependent, in part, on the particular combination of textbook and test used. More importantly, the accuracy of the test scores as indicators of topics learned by students is adversely affected when there is little correspondence. If only 20 to 50 percent of the curriculum taught is being tested, then the test scores reflect more of what students already know (ability) than what students have been taught (achievement).

A second purpose of curriculum alignment, therefore, is to increase the validity of test scores and improve their usefulness. In other words, an aligned curriculum is organized so that test scores reflect what has been taught. Test scores then provide useful information about the effectiveness of the instructional program.

Some educators erroneously think of curriculum alignment as a shortcut to instructional improvement. While it is true that test scores often increase when curriculum and tests are brought more into alignment, it is a one-time increase that has nothing to do with better instruction. An aligned curriculum merely allows the test scores to accurately reflect what is being learned by students.

Other educators believe that tests should dictate the curriculum. They start with the test and define the curriculum as that covered in the test. Although in some cases a district may reasonably decide that the topics covered in a particular test are in fact the elements that should be included in the curriculum, it is more defensible to first define the curriculum and then select or construct the test that measures the curriculum specifications. District standards, not test publishers, should guide decisionmaking.

Typically, a district's curriculum alignment must be adjusted. Changes in tests, textbooks, objectives, district standards, and exit outcomes throw the system out of alignment to some degree. With the curriculum organized into learning units, however, the realignment process may be easier. Realignment can be based on learning unit objectives rather than lesson objectives. Unit objectives are easier to manage because curriculum committees are not overwhelmed by hundreds of possible lesson objectives every time realignment is necessary. Learning units and unit objectives are manageable building blocks for curriculum organization.

Managing the Curriculum

Implementing a complete scope and sequence of learning units can be facilitated by a good management system. A good management system needs to be able to do several things. First, information is needed on when teachers have taught the learning units and which students have mastered each unit in the curriculum. Second, teacher experience with the curriculum will indicate particular units that need revision; the management system should provide a way of collecting this teacher information and acting on it. Third, student learning data can provide information on areas of teacher expertise

Staff Development Activities for Curriculum Organization

Define Outcomes

- ☐ Establish exit outcomes
- ☐ Write unit objectives
- ☐ Develop district standards

Develop Learning Units

- ☐ Understand mastery learning rationale
- ☐ Develop learning unit specifications
- ☐ Write initial instruction
- ☐ Design formative and mastery assessment instruments
- ☐ Develop extension and corrective activities

Align Curriculum

- ☐ Organize exit outcomes, district standards, and unit objectives
- ☐ Match curriculum and tests

Manage the Curriculum

- ☐ Monitor learning unit implementation and student learning
- ☐ Maintain and revise curriculum
- ☐ Design staff development activities

in the district. A good management system can use this information to suggest a staff development strategy that capitalizes on teacher expertise. Methods for each of these three management tasks are discussed below.

The first task of a management system is to monitor the implementation of learning units. The school principal can be responsible for this monitoring. In Red Bank Public Schools, for example, the principals ask each grade level at the beginning of the school year to specify approximate dates when the unit tests will be given during the year. The principal then follows unit implementation and student achievement on unit tests. This monitoring provides useful information for future curriculum planning since a good record is maintained of what units were or were not mastered by students.

A second task of a management system is *curriculum revision*. Curricula need to be refined and updated yearly so the learning units reflect what teachers learned about the teaching of the unit. The curriculum committee that produced the district standards might meet once a year to review the learning units at each grade level. District standards can be used to screen suggestions and make recommendations for deletion or addition of units. The curriculum committee can also recommend, on the basis of input from the principals, where district-wide needs exist so that appropriate coordination of staff development activities can take place for the following year. Such activities might involve planning a new instructional unit, implementing a new instructional strategy, or gathering data on an area of curriculum which needs to be improved. By following such a process, the curriculum becomes the yearly plan for the district.

Unit objectives are easier to manage because curriculum committees are not overwhelmed by hundreds of possible lesson objectives every time realignment is necessary.

Every five to ten years the committee needs to review and update the district standards to insure that the standards are still congruent with recent research, with the best instructional practice, and with emerging conceptions of what is appropriate to teach in schools. For example, the recent call for computer literacy has necessitated the introduction of a new subject area into the curriculum. By reviewing district standards for each subject area, staff can make decisions about how computers should be used. Thus the district's curricula can evolve in an orderly and manageable way while assuring that the best of past practice is incorporated in present instruction.

A third task of a management system is to *provide information for staff development*. When student learning data are routinely collected, the district staff development program can be tied directly to improving

Table 2
Number of Students Mastering, Passing, and Not Mastering Learning Units in Sixth-Grade Mathematics

		Teacher											
		1			2			3			4		
Unit Number	Unit Title	M	P	NM	M	P	NM	M	P	NM	M	P	NM
6.01	Whole Numbers	5	14	3	7	7	4	15	2	1	10	5	1
6.02	Place value and numeration	12	9	1	11	8	0	10	6	2	9	5	2
6.03	Addition/subtraction of decimals	14	7	1	12	7	0	8	11	0	7	8	1
6.04	Multiplication of decimals	9	11	2	8	11	1	8	11	0	7	6	3
6.05	Division of decimals and review	2	17	3	1	17	2	11	8	0	14	2	0
6.06	Decimal summary	3	17	2	7	12	1	12	6	1	8	7	1
6.07	Addition/subtraction of like fractions	10	8	1	7	13	0	9	9	1	6	6	4

M = Mastery (Score of 90% or better), P = Pass (Score of 70%–89%), NM = Non-Mastery (Score of less than 70%)

instruction in particular learning units. Table 2, for example, presents data from Red Bank. These data present the number of students mastering (a score of 90% or better), passing (70% to 89%), or not mastering (less than 70%) the first seven of sixteen sixth-grade mathematics units for four teachers. Since classes are formed heterogeneously and the four teachers use the same unit tests, the data can be used to identify those teachers with exceptional skill in teaching certain learning units.

For example, careful examination of the data will reveal that Teacher 3 has much greater success with Unit 6.01 (Whole Numbers) than the other three teachers. In effect, Teacher 3 is the expert pedagogue in the district for this particular unit and could, if supported by a staff development program, share this expertise with the other teachers. It also turns out that each teacher is an "expert pedagogue" in at least one of the learning units. By using this information as the basis of a staff development program, a district can draw upon the best available knowledge in the district and allow teachers the opportunity to share that knowledge with their colleagues. Other patterns of success may surface as data for several years are examined together.

Summary

These four activities—defining outcomes, developing learning units, aligning curriculum, and managing the curriculum—help to organize curriculum in outcome-based education. By attending to curriculum organization efficiently, it is hoped that districts and schools can move into issues of instructional organization (see Burns, 1987) and begin to realize the full potential of outcome-based education.

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Dr. Robert Burns is project director for the Support for Outcome-Based Education Project at the Far West Laboratory. Dr. David Squires is Supervisor for Curriculum and Staff Development in Red Bank Public Schools, Red Bank, New Jersey.

OBE News, Activities, and Resources

Charlotte Danielson, of Outcomes Associates, will be publishing a newsletter called *The Exchange.* The newsletter will be a clearinghouse of practical ideas for educators implementing outcome-based education. Brief articles will describe school and district practices in curriculum, instruction, building-level planning, learning support, information management, communication, and staff development. *The Exchange* will appear five times a year beginning in January 1988. Further information may be obtained by writing Outcomes Associates, PO Box 1046, Monroe WA 98272 or calling (206) 252-2173 or (206) 743-9000.

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The third national conference on outcome-based education will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, February 4-6 1988. The conference is being sponsored by the Network for Outcome-Based Schools and the National School Conference Institute. Experts on mastery learning and outcome-based education, practitioner sessions, and on-site school visits in the Phoenix area are featured. Over 400 participants from 30 states attended last year's conference. For more information, contact the National School Conference Institute, 3113 West Columbine Dr., Phoenix Az 85029 or call (602) 438-0225.

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The Far West Laboratory's Rural Schools Assistance Center has funded a project involving the School Improvement Unit of the Arizona Department of Education, three rural Arizona districts, and the Support for Outcome-Based Education project at the Laboratory. The three Arizona districts are Liberty Elementary, Show Low Unified, and Pine Elementary. The purpose of the project is to examine ways for rural districts to cooperate in the writing and sharing of mastery learning units. For more information, contact Robert Burns, Far West Laboratory at (415) 565-3264 or Sharon Bolster, Arizona Department of Education at (602) 255-5567.

Research on OBE: What We Know and Don't Know

Karen M. Evans and Jean A. King

Despite the nationwide popularity of OBE, only a handful of studies provide meaningful answers to questions about its effects.

Outcome-based education (OBE) has an intuitive appeal that hooks people. Simply set the outcomes you expect students to achieve, then teach and reteach in as many different ways and for as long as it takes until everyone meets them. In its simplest form, the OBE process virtually guarantees every student an education. And in this light, what is surprising is *not* that 42 states are involved in some form of outcome-based reform (Varnon and King 1993), but rather that they have waited until now to try it.

Despite OBE's appeal, however, research documenting its effects is fairly rare. An earlier literature review reported that existing evidence was largely perceptual, anecdotal, and small scale (Evans and King 1992), and our recent search for additional *published* information led to the same conclusion. Testimonials, speeches, and narrative descriptions may be inspirational and helpful, but they provide little solid ground on which to build a reform movement.

Admittedly, researchers attempting to "prove" the effects of outcome-based education face various problems. First, OBE is an umbrella concept under which various reform efforts can be placed, and people who ask, "What exactly *is* outcome-based education?" may receive several answers. Block, Efthim, and Burns (1989) include OBE in their conceptual overview of mastery learning, but mastery learning is not the only way to implement OBE. The fact that people who practice open education also claim to engage in outcome-based education suggests the breadth of the concept.

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Creating another complication, Spady and Marshall (1991) distinguish among traditional, transitional, and transformational approaches to schoolwide or districtwide OBE, noting that the first can operate within an existing school system, while the last requires the creation of a whole new system. Even more basic is the distinction between OBE and the setting of high school graduation outcomes. Just because a state requires its high school graduates to achieve specific outcomes does not mean that schools *necessarily* engage in outcome-based education to prepare students for graduation assessments. And finally, a movement that purports to develop "complex thinkers," "responsible citizens," and "community contributors" faces complex measurement challenges, both conceptual and practical (Minneapolis Public Schools 1992).

Despite these limitations, a small but growing body of OBE research

> The average student in a mastery learning class performed at the 70th percentile, whereas the average student in a control class performed at the 50th percentile.

does exist. Relevant research includes information on classroom-based mastery learning; over 20 years of evidence from the Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model in Johnson City, New York; and studies from state-level OBE projects in Utah, Missouri, and Minnesota.

The Effects of Mastery Learning

Although OBE does not require mastery learning as an exclusive instructional model, many people consider mastery learning to be an integral part of OBE beliefs and practice (Burns 1987, Schleisman and King 1990, Spady 1982). In a comprehensive meta-analysis, Kulik, J. Kulik, and Bangert-Drowns (1990) integrate the various findings of the last decade (Guskey and Gates 1985, J. Kulik et al. 1979, Slavin 1987) and address inconsistencies about the effects of mastery learning. They examine 108 studies on Bloom's Learning for Mastery and Keller's Personalized System of Instruction.[1] Both approaches present material in short units, and students take formative tests on each unit.

The meta-analysis indicates that the average student in a mastery learning class performed at the 70th percentile, whereas the average student in a control class performed at the 50th percentile. The authors conclude that mastery learning does have positive effects on student achievement. Results were better for social science classes, on locally developed tests, in teacher-paced classes, when the required level of performance was high, and when the control group received less feedback. They also note that lower-aptitude students enjoyed a greater gain than higher-aptitude students.[2] The most consistently negative effect was on course completion. Students in mastery learning classes completed fewer courses than students in control classes.

Although the authors argue that the positive effects are not as great as Bloom predicts, they do state that the overall effect of mastery learning is impressive when compared with other educational treatments: "Few educational treatments of any sort were consistently associated with achievement effects as large as those produced by mastery teaching."

The Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model

One current working model of an outcome-based educational program at the district level is the Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model (ODDM) begun in 1972 in the Johnson City, New York, School District under Superintendent Albert Mamary.

The developers of ODDM make clear that it is an "empowering, participatory, and noncoercive" change process (Alessi et al. 1991). Johnson City's ODDM, using an instructional model similar to Learning for Mastery, has been so successful it is the only total school curriculum model validated by the National Diffusion Network (Vickery 1990). Adding to its credibility is the fact that Johnson City is a lower-middle-class community with few professional citizens and the second highest poverty rate of 10 urban districts in its county. Over 20 percent of its school population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch, and it has a sizable Asian immigrant population with limited English proficiency. (See "On Creating an Environment Where All Students Learn: A Conversation with Al Mamary," p. 24).

When Johnson City began its program in 1972, it ranked 14th out of 14 districts in its county on academic achievement as measured on standardized tests. Approximately 45 to 50 percent of its students scored at or above grade level in reading and math in grades 1 through 8. By 1977, the percentages rose to about 70 percent, and by 1984 ranged between 80 and 90 percent.

To have a consistent measure for tracking student progress, in 1984 the district chose to identify the number of students whose scores indicated achievement six months or more above grade level on the California Achievement Tests (CATs) in reading and math. They found that in 1976, 44 percent of all students had performed at six months or more above grade level in reading, and 53 percent had done so in math. By 1984 these figures had increased to 75 percent in reading and 79 percent in math.

Other indicators of success in Johnson City include performance on the New York State Regents exams and attainment of the Regents diploma. In 1989, for example, Johnson City students, on every exam, always surpassed the state performance and either equaled or surpassed the county performance (with 70 percent of Johnson City students participating, 58 percent in the county, and 40 percent of students statewide participating in the exams). In 1986, 77 percent of Johnson City students received a Regents diploma, compared with 43 percent statewide and 59 percent countywide.

In 1988, the New York Board of Regents instituted more rigorous requirements for a Regents diploma. In 1989, Johnson City still outperformed the state and county, with 55 percent of its students receiving the diploma, compared with 33 percent statewide and 47 percent countywide. This placed Johnson City in the top 10 percent of schools statewide in percentage of students receiving Regents diplomas. These figures aside, however, perhaps the most convincing evidence of Johnson City's success is the 100 percent enrollment, in 1991-92, of students in 9th grade algebra.

Lessons from States

At the state level, documentation of the effects of OBE is difficult to find, and what is available is largely perceptual. Nevertheless, data collected in Utah, Missouri, and Minnesota provide useful insights.

State evaluators in Utah conducted more than 300 interviews with board members, administrators, teachers, support staff, and students regarding progress toward implementation. They administered three questionnaires (at

Outcome-Based Education Is Not Mastery Learning

Robert E. Slavin

One of the questions often raised in the debate over outcome-based education (OBE) is whether any research supports this approach. To my knowledge, no studies directly compare students in OBE classes or schools to students in similar control schools. This being the case, advocates on both sides of the debate have attempted to make inferences about OBE from other areas of research.

In particular, opponents of OBE have often cited my 1987 review of research on group-based mastery learning as evidence that OBE is ineffective (Slavin 1987). Such a comparison is inappropriate. The research I reviewed involved strategies in which teachers teach a series of lessons and then give a formative test. Students who score below a pre-established mastery criterion (say, 80 percent correct) then receive a few hours of corrective instruction, while others do enrichment activities. A second summative test is then given, and the cycle may be repeated if many students still score below the mastery criterion.

My review was a response to Bloom's assertion that mastery learning could produce gains of two standard deviations (1984). He based his claim on brief laboratory studies in which students who did not master the material on the first test received substantial additional time, one-to-one tutoring, or both. I concluded that in more realistic settings, mastery learning had far less impressive results. Group-based mastery learning often produced modest increases in performance on tests closely tied to the material being taught, but achievement on broader-based measures did not improve.

I hope it is clear that my review of group-based mastery learning had nothing to do with OBE. In its broadest definition I find it hard to oppose the concept of OBE; who would argue that educational programming should not be based on some idea of what we want students to know or be able to do? On the other hand, it is legitimate to debate what kinds of outcomes we want, how they will be measured, and what happens if students don't achieve them.

In the absence of research, OBE proposals being made by various states and districts must be evaluated on their details. Certainly, the whole community should decide what schools or students should be held accountable for. Without the details of these proposals, I don't have a position on any of them, but I do know that my mastery learning review has nothing to do with the issue one way or the other. ■

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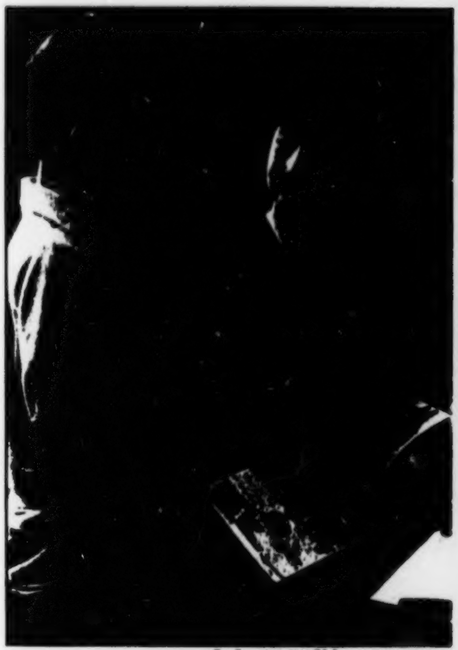
the district, school, and individual staff levels) about attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and perceived effects, and also asked for student achievement data. Thirty-four districts, 437 schools, and more than 7,400 teachers returned questionnaires, and 11 districts submitted student achievement data. The evaluators reached the following conclusions:

- Implementation of OBE generally requires a restructuring of the entire educational system and consequently takes a significant period of time.
- More OBE implementation takes place in districts that have adopted ODDM as a model than in other districts.
- More OBE implementation takes place in elementary schools than in secondary schools, and in smaller districts than in larger districts.
- Although the evidence is limited, districts with more complete implementation of OBE also appear to demonstrate higher student achievement gains (Applegate 1992).
- Districts using ODDM seem to be experiencing the most successful implementations.

Another state effort noted by OBE proponents is Missouri's Statewide Project for Improving Student Achievement (Cohen and Hyman 1991, Guskey and Block 1991). This project, called the Instructional Management System, involves the following components: (1) a statewide curriculum; (2) three state-endorsed instructional programs (mastery learning, outcome-based education, and cooperative learning); and (3) a criterion test, the Missouri Mastery Achievement Test (MMAT) that precisely measures the curriculum's outcomes.

Beginning in 1986-87, scores on the mastery test have significantly risen statewide each year in nearly every subject area. At the same time, scores have increased on norm-referenced tests, including the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills for grades 2 through 8 and the Test of Achievement and Proficiency for grades 9 and 10.

One example of the Missouri project's success is an "Academic Achievement Demonstration Site," the Thorpe Gordon Elementary School in Jefferson City. In 1987, approximately 40 to 60 percent of the students in this inner-city school ranked in the bottom two quintiles in language arts, mathematics, and science on the MMAT. By 1989, 10 percent or less were in the bottom two quintiles, with few students placing in the lowest one. In addition, 70 to 90 percent now rank in the top two quintiles, with 50 to 75 percent in the highest (Guskey and Block 1991).



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In Minnesota, the Department of Education's Office of Educational Leadership worked in 10 project sites across the state from 1989 through 1991 to determine the effectiveness of an outcome-based system of education in improving student learning (Minnesota Department of Education 1990, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement 1991, Bosma and King 1992). Research activities, including interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and parents, sought to document the *perceived* effects of the changes made, that is, to provide initial evidence about what was happening to students as a result of the transformational OBE approaches being implemented (King et al. 1992).

The results across 37 schools involved during 1990-1991 included three perceived effects on student learning. Forty-nine percent of the respondents reported more and better

Mastery Learning in Chicago: Not an OBE Failure

Beau Fly Jones

Widely circulated information says OBE failed in Chicago. As a program coordinator in the Chicago Public Schools at that time, I would like to clarify several points. First, we did not implement OBE. Our program, Chicago Mastery Learning Reading, was an adaptation of Benjamin Bloom's mastery learning theory, what Bloom and others would later call enhanced mastery learning. At all grade levels, instructional content addressed different learning styles through alternative modes of presentation; examples were both visual and verbal; and students were encouraged to apply their concepts and skills to new materials. The material for grades 5 through 8 contained embedded learning strategy prompts, which were gradually eliminated over the course of a unit.

Second, test scores did not drop during this program. Students in the early primary grades maintained the traditional seven-month gain in their scores, and students in the upper grades had an average gain of 12 months in their scores for 1983 and 1984.

Third, the program was not abandoned. Mandated by Ruth Love when she became superintendent, the program was officially dismantled as she was leaving. Individual schools continued to use the materials for years, and some schools still use revised versions of them under a different name.

Fourth, the major substantive charges against the program were that the early grade materials focused too heavily on phonics and that the materials for all grades did not involve children sufficiently in real literature. Both are true, but at the time we implemented the program, the stories available in the program were an improvement over the "literature" in the basal textbooks being used.

If I could do it over again, I would teach skills and strategies in the context of specific projects and units that would be interdisciplinary, learning-centered, and steeped in real literature. But as I look back on what we created, the research behind our program was solid, students did develop better reading skills, and for many, the program provided opportunities to be successful learners. ■

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learning. ("I've gotten a lot more out of class than the last few years." "There's been a tremendous increase in student learning." "We have set higher expectations, and students are achieving more.") Forty-three percent reported increased student involvement in learning. ("Kids really take a stake in learning and are more responsible." "I'm pushing myself more.") Thirty-five percent reported different effects for different student types. Many parents expressed a sense that OBE "works for the average and unmotivated learner," both because these students are allowed sufficient time and opportunities to succeed and because some become part of regular instruction for the first time. But many respondents reported negative perceptions for students who have succeeded in the traditional system. ("Admittedly we have picked up some we would've lost, but we are losing some at the top." "We feel the higher students won't be challenged enough.")

OBE's Possibilities

What, then, can we conclude about OBE as a restructuring effort to date? Acknowledging the paucity of hard data, we find at least three themes. First, the data from research on mastery learning; Johnson City, New York; Missouri; and Utah suggest that mastery learning and its ODDM implementations are effective at the classroom and building levels. Second, experiences in Johnson City and Utah indicate that the Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model can work and is readily adapted into traditional systems. Third, the mastery learning and Minnesota data document that OBE appears to benefit low-achieving students while having questionable effects on high-achieving students (Evans and King, in press). These three points speak cogently to the emerging possibilities of OBE within the traditional system. However, whether transformational OBE can effect similar changes remains to be seen.

What the data—or lack of it—suggest is the compelling need for more research. But not just any research will do. First, we must be clear what we mean by OBE. Second, we must determine what it is we want to do well in schools and how that can be best documented. For example, are we committed to "authentic" learning, with measures that tap such achievement (Newmann and Archbald 1992), or will we settle for improvements on standardized tests?

In our work with OBE and its increasing numbers of dedicated educators, we have become convinced that traditional studies are simply not rich enough to portray the changes that an OBE system may inspire. And

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so, we challenge researchers to devise innovative evaluation methodologies that truly capture the excitement of real and lasting change in schools. ■

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[1] The authors of the meta-analysis used *effect size* to compare results on the various studies examined. Effect size is defined as the difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups divided by the standard deviation of the control group. The overall finding for the meta-analysis was an effect size of 0.52 standard deviations, with a range of 1.58-0.22.

[2] The effect sizes were 0.6 for lower-aptitude students and 0.4 for higher-aptitude students.

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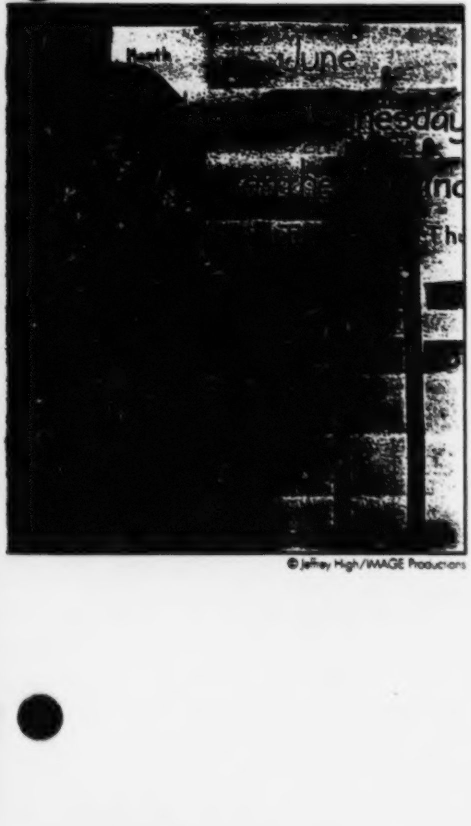
Aiming for New Outcomes: The Promise and The Reality

John O'Neil

Besieged by critics, supporters of outcome-based education are struggling to confront the implications of their philosophy.



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Just two years ago, the rhetoric supporting a massive American shift to an education system organized around student outcomes was cresting.

From Congress to the State House, politicians and educators advocated higher standards for student learning. One expert after another opined that consensus was needed on what students "should know and be able to do" at the culmination of their K-12 experience. Then, the thinking went, schools would refocus their programs to help students attain these desired outcomes. Ultimately, students would earn a diploma not by merely sitting through a series of required courses—they would have to demonstrate their proficiency in these common outcomes. "Outcome-based education" (OBE) was the label loosely applied to this results-oriented thinking.

The talk sparked a spate of activity. Acting on the impetus provided by national education goals, a national process was launched to describe outcomes in the major subject areas. State after state undertook to craft common learner outcomes, or to require districts to do so. One state, Pennsylvania, pledged to phase out the traditional Carnegie unit, saying that within several years the state's high school graduates would have to demonstrate attainment of outcomes, not merely accrue the necessary clock hours in required courses. If put into practice, the changes proposed in Pennsylvania and elsewhere would have marked a dramatic shift in the way schools do business.

Since then, however, the OBE bandwagon has stalled. In Pennsylvania, the state was forced to curtail its ambitious OBE plan in the wake of fierce opposition, much of it mobilized by organized religious conservative groups. Among their criticisms, opponents claimed that the state's proposed outcomes watered down academics in favor of ill-defined values and process skills. Similar charges were lobbed against OBE plans in other states, and state officials in Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, and Virginia have been forced to revise, delay, or drop their efforts.

In the face of the opposition, many OBE enthusiasts are retrenching, pondering how an idea that, on its face, appears so sensible, proved to be so controversial. "I think OBE is largely done for as a saleable public term," a former Pennsylvania official who played a key role in the state's OBE plan says darkly. "Now, nobody can use the O-word," jokes Bob Marzano, senior program director at the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL).

What Is OBE, Anyway?

One reason OBE has sparked differences of opinion is that many people—even within the camps of proponents and opponents—define the term differently.

At one level, outcome-based education is the simple principle that decisions about curriculum and instruction should be driven by the outcomes we'd like children to display at the end of their educational experiences. "It's a simple matter of making sure that you're clear on what teaching should accomplish ... and adjusting your teaching and assessing as

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Many OBE enthusiasts are retrenching, pondering how an idea that, on its face, appears so sensible, proved to be so controversial.

necessary to accomplish what you set out to accomplish," says Grant Wiggins, director of programs for the Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure. "Viewed that way, nobody in their right mind would have objections to it." In this sense, outcome-based education is a process, and one could use it to come up with schools as unlike one another as Summerhill or one E.D. Hirsch dreamed up.

At another level, policymakers increasingly talk about creating outcome-driven education "systems" that would redefine traditional approaches to accountability. In policy-ese this means that schools should be accountable for demonstrating that students have mastered important outcomes (so-called "outputs") not for their per-pupil ratio or the number of books in the school library (so-called "inputs").

Both the outcome-based philosophy and the notion that schools should have more autonomy (site-based management) have been adopted as the new conventional wisdom guiding accountability, despite the lack of compelling research evidence supporting either reform, points out Thomas Guskey, professor of education policy studies at the University of Kentucky. Policy wonks love the crystal clear logic of OBE and Site-Based Management—at least on paper. "Outcome-based education gives them the 'what' and site-based management gives them the 'who'" in their accountability system, Guskey says.

Parents and educators familiar with a specific version of outcome-based education often equate all OBE with the model they've heard most about. But the models differ. The Johnson City, New York, public schools, for example, have gained a national reputation for their outcome-based education program. The Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model, as they refer to their model, has contributed to impressive gains in student achievement of desired outcomes over the past two decades (See "On Creating an Environment Where All Students Learn: A Conversation with Al Mamary," p. 24). Another highly visible model of outcome-based education is that espoused by Bill Spady and the High Success Network (See "Choosing Outcomes of Significance," p. 18).

The different interpretations of outcome-based education help explain why, even among those who support an outcomes-driven education system, sharp divisions persist over what it would look like. For example, business leaders and policymakers appear to strongly support the idea of outcome-based accountability systems. But their conception of desirable learning outcomes appears to be very different from that offered by educators.

The very nature of outcome-based education forces one to address inherently controversial issues. "The questions ultimately get down to the fundamentals—what's worth knowing and what's the purpose of schooling," says Jay McTighe, an observer of the OBE movement who directs the Maryland Assessment Consortium. "Outcome-based education gets to the heart of the matter."

Current Conditions

Proponents of OBE suggest that an outcome-based education system would help to address some of the problematic conditions confronting contemporary schools.

Numerous experts, for example, believe that the currently expressed outcomes for student learning are neither sufficiently rigorous nor appropriate for the requirements of students' adult lives. One national study after another has shown that graduates of U.S. schools are able to demonstrate very basic levels of skill and knowledge, but that they lack higher-order thinking skills. Put simply, many students can (and do) make it through the education system without learning needed skills and knowledge, even though they've earned the requisite number of Carnegie units and passed minimum competency exams and classroom tests. Under OBE, students would be required to *demonstrate* these necessary outcomes before graduation. Just as pilots are required to demonstrate their facility at flying an aircraft (not merely sit through the required instruction), students would be pushed to display the outcomes society holds important.

This raises the related equity issue. The futures of many students are compromised because the outcomes held for them are low or unclear. As they progress through school, such students are frequently tracked into low-level courses where they are not held responsible for the outcomes necessary for success after graduation. As long as the credentialing system is based on seat time, one student may earn a diploma by taking advanced placement history and calculus, while another makes it through the system taking watered-down academic fare. Put another way, some students—and some schools—are held to high standards, while many others are not. According to the OBE philosophy, all students will be held responsible for attaining common outcomes. And schools will be responsible for altering present conditions to prepare them to do it.

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In addition, OBE can bring some needed focus to the way schools are organized. Currently, state and district regulations—including graduation requirements, competency tests, textbook adoption policies, local curriculum guides, special mandates to teach about AIDS or gun safety—combine in a patchwork of diffuse and oftentimes contradictory signals to which teachers must attend as they plan instruction. In the system envisioned by OBE enthusiasts, the desired learner outcomes become the foundation upon which decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, staff development, and so on are based. Presumably, such a system would be better aligned and focused and, thus, more efficient than the system now operating.

What Outcomes?

As promising an approach as OBE may be, even proponents have struggled to explain how schools can successfully act upon the implications of their philosophy. Few schools appear to have actually reorganized their curriculum and overhauled their assessment and reporting schemes to reflect new, higher outcomes. More commonly, schools and districts draft outcomes based on the present curriculum or write ambitious and far-reaching new outcomes while changing the curriculum very little.

The reason seems to be that schools, districts, and states that have attempted to use OBE philosophy very quickly find themselves struggling with some difficult challenges.

The first is deciding what outcomes should form the heart of an OBE plan—and no aspect of OBE has proven quite so contentious. Opponents of OBE have consistently charged that traditional academic content is omitted or buried in a morass of pedagogic claptrap in the OBE plans that have emerged to date.

For example, a draft plan in Virginia, since shelved, contained six major areas of student outcomes: environmental stewardship, personal well-being and accomplishment, interpersonal relationships, lifelong learning, cultural and creative endeavors, work and economic well-being, and local and global civic participation. According to the draft, a student outcome for personal well-being and accomplishment was "a responsible individual who has a good sense of his or her abilities and needs, and uses that knowledge consistently to make choices likely to lead to a healthy, productive, and fulfilling life." A worthy aim, to be sure, but critics convinced the general public that such outcomes would lead to more "touchy-feely" exercises and less history and math in the schools.

Supporters of OBE find themselves in a precarious position. Many of them believe strongly that an educated graduate is not just someone who has absorbed a set of discrete experiences in the traditional academic domains.

Parents and educators familiar with a specific version of outcome-based education often equate all OBE with the model they've heard most about.

The OBE movement "has taken shape around the idea that the educational experience is too fragmented, and that important outcomes not easily pegged to typical subject area divisions and pedagogical approaches are falling through the cracks," says Wiggins. But architects of OBE plans find it extraordinarily difficult to weave the academic content into the broad outcomes. "If you say that the purpose of school is not control over the disciplines, but control over these more generic capacities," then there is a danger that traditional rigor will be diminished, says Wiggins. "Because if you now say that the purpose of a literature program, for example, is to teach people to communicate effectively, you are now saying, implicitly to some people, that it doesn't matter if you read Judy Blume or Shakespeare to accomplish that end."

OBE advocates have struggled mightily with the question of whether one set of outcomes will fit the needs of all students; those who will go on to Harvard as well as those who will clerk at K-Mart. One option would be to craft outcomes based on the kind of curriculum taken by students in the advanced college-prep track—outcomes derived from physics, U.S. history, and so on—and push more students to attain such outcomes. But the more common approach taken by OBE planners has been to frame outcomes that describe students as "effective communicators" or "problem-solvers." Parents of high-achieving students, in particular, fear that such nebulous outcomes will result in less academic rigor in their children's program.

Good outcomes have to have three elements: the content knowledge, the competence (what the student is *doing*), and the setting (under what conditions the student is performing), says Kit Marshall, associate director and co-founder of the High Success Network, Inc. Content is *essential*, she says: "you can't demonstrate anything without the basics." But the field has fallen short in defining what a good outcome is, she says. "Many so-called outcomes are really more like goals, and they aren't assessable as such," says Marshall. "We have not clearly defined in a large enough sense what an outcome is, or what a demonstration of an outcome looks like. The field has not done that well enough."

The drafting of common outcomes for an OBE system requires enormous time and care. Even then, outcomes will appear too vague for some or too specific for others. If outcomes are too "global," McTighe notes, critics ask "Where's the beef?" But if a state specifies dozens or hundreds of outcomes, it is attacked for "prescribing the curriculum" and treading on local initiative.

How to Assess

A second major challenge facing any move to an outcome-based system is redesigning student assessment and reporting programs. Since OBE requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, the assessments used to evaluate their performances become critically important.

But are the student assessments currently available up to the task? Although assessment experts know how to measure basic levels of skill and knowledge, they have less proven experience measuring higher-order outcomes within the subject area domains and almost no track record with the transformational, cross-disciplinary outcomes that some OBE plans envision.

Many experts say that performance-based assessments—not standardized, multiple-choice tests—are necessary to measure student attainment of outcomes. "Many outcomes demand a type of assessment that is more performance-oriented" because most current tests fail to measure the applications of knowledge described in new outcomes, says McTighe.

David Hornbeck, a former state school superintendent in Maryland who has advised states on outcome-based systems, believes the field is making progress on designing assessments that measure complex tasks. "We can measure much higher levels of knowledge and skills than we try to measure routinely now," he says, citing improvements in the assessment of student writing. But most experts agree that designing assessments linked to high-level and broadly written outcomes present enormous technical challenges.

One reason assessment is so critical, of course, is that OBE philosophy suggests that students should *demonstrate* their attainment of outcomes before receiving a diploma, a notion some experts referred to as "performance-based graduation." But even OBE proponents suggest moving very cautiously in considering whether to deny students a diploma based on their failure to demonstrate their proficiency on the assessments currently available. On certain outcomes, it's probably wise to give students feedback on their performance, but not to deny advancement or a diploma to students who fail, suggests Marzano.

Dubious outcomes and the prospect that assessment of those outcomes would be used in a high-stakes fashion fueled the criticisms about OBE in states such as Pennsylvania. But *not* holding students accountable to outcomes carries consequences, too. The Kentucky accountability system measures schools on their ability to help students to attain state-defined learner outcomes. Schools are held accountable (and can be taken over by the state if they show insufficient improvement), but students are not, says Guskey of the University of Kentucky (See "What You Assess May *Not* Be What You Get," p. 51). In fact, the state-required assessment of 12th graders is administered during the spring of their senior year, and is not connected with graduation requirements, "so students can just blow it off" without consequences, says Guskey.

Building School Capacity

A third major challenge facing those wishing to move to an OBE system involves building the capacity of schools to make the changes necessary for students to master required outcomes. On paper, OBE suggests that each school's curriculum and instruction would be re-organized to support agreed-upon student outcomes. In reality, many practices and traditions—mandatory standardized testing programs and college admissions requirements, for example—combine to create an inertia preventing local schools from changing very substantively in response to the precepts of OBE. This is true of other reforms besides OBE, notes Wiggins: faced with the prospects of a major new reform, educators often "retitle what they are already inclined to do."

For example, many of the schools claiming to practice OBE appear to offer the same set of courses as before, even though they've drafted new outcomes. A real tension exists between the curriculum educators might wish to implement and the one that responds to current conditions and constraints. For example, "Right now, given our transitional education system, we've got to respect and respond to the fact that algebra is still a door to college," says Marshall. "So regardless of whether or not someone thinks that you'll ever use algebra, we've got to see to it that we're holding ourselves accountable, that we're expanding students' options, not limiting them."

Because drafting new outcomes and developing new assessments linked to them are such difficult tasks, they have drawn more attention than the question of what can be done to build schools' capacity to help students attain new outcomes, believes John Champlin, executive director of the National Center for Outcomes-Based Education and the former superintendent in Johnson City, New York "Outcomes are what we want, but what we have to do is to change the capacity of schools" to help students attain them. States need to place as much attention on the capacity-building side of outcome-based systems as on the accountability side, he says.

Future Directions

Although it's impossible to predict precisely what the future of outcome-based education is, there are several likely trends.

OBE plans will probably rely more heavily on outcomes defined in traditional subject areas, rather than the "transformational" outcomes that cross the disciplines. "The starting point and the emphasis should be on the academic disciplines," says Hornbeck. This is the model of the national standards for content and student performance, which are being crafted in all of the major disciplines and which will be published over the next year or two (mathematics standards have already been written). States that have defined outcomes within the subject areas, as in Kentucky, for example, have not encountered the same degree of opposition as states that attempted to create cross-disciplinary outcomes.

Another likely trend is that states will move slowly on attaching high stakes to outcome-based education plans. Few states, for example, are likely to abolish the Carnegie unit as the basis for graduation, as Pennsylvania plans to do. Instead, bet on more states attempting to define learner outcomes, aligning assessment programs with those outcomes, and compiling student assessment data with other indicators of school performance as part of the accountability system. Until (and unless) performance-based assessments shore up their technical qualities, or the outcomes are more clearly defined, high-stakes uses are likely to be frowned upon.

A third trend is more systematic attempts to communicate with the public what outcome-based education is about. Educators substantially underestimated the degree of public confusion and disagreement with OBE in several of the states that attempted to launch programs. "There has to be an awful lot of attention to communicating in simple terms," says James Cooper, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. Virginia's OBE plan foundered, he says, in part because opponents convinced the middle ground of citizens that OBE (as defined in the state's proposed "common core" of learning outcomes) would mean lower academic standards. "The vagueness [of the plan] was a real political problem," says Cooper. State officials, "try as they might, could not say simply and clearly enough what this common core was. Then the opposition defined it in their terms as 'mushy-headed.'"

It may be that the public believes that the present performance of schools does not warrant the restructuring that would result from a true application of OBE's precepts. "People are really not that dissatisfied with what's going on" in schools, Cooper believes. "People are interested in school improvement, but not necessarily in break-the-mold schools or break-the-mold education." As a result, "major sweeping changes are exceedingly difficult," and modest, incremental changes seem the only plausible route. ■

John O'Neil is Contributing Editor to *Educational Leadership*.

The OBE Attack

When key sociologist-educrats invite their opposition to dialogue over so-called "educational controversies," you can be sure something is not quite right. Recently, according to an article in the May 17th issue of the *Denver Post*, "some of the most outspoken national opponents and proponents of outcome-based education have already met informally in Denver to identify common concerns." The article described a recent meeting involving Dr. William Spady, an education consultant widely recognized as the high priest of outcome-based education (OBE), the controversial philosophy that has stirred fierce battles in school districts and state houses nationwide. The *Post* article continued:

> Spady and members of his High Success Network consulting firm met earlier this month in Denver with Bob Simonds, national president of Citizens for Excellence in Education, a traditionalist Christian organization.
>
> Also present were representatives of Focus on the Family, a national religious group based in Colorado Springs, and the Independence Institute, a conservative think tank from Golden.

No Compromise Possible

According to the *Post*, "Spady says he's willing to talk about OBE 'choice,' which would put stress on letting parents in their own communities decide on the type of outcomes they want." Simonds is quoted as being "interested in talking about 'enhanced OBE,' which is content-based — strong on math, science, English, but not concerned with 'attitudes, values.'" Amy Stephens, representing James Dobson's Focus on the Family, wisely reserved judgment on what, if any, steps could be taken to reconcile the positions held by the two opposing sides.

Alarm bells should be going off across the nation. There can be no compromise on this issue. As outrageous as the outcomes are (to quote no less an education "authority" than Al Shanker, president of the radical American Federation of Teachers union, in his widely circulated newspaper column, "Outrageous Outcomes," of September 12, 1993), outcomes in the values domain — which have been bad for as long as this author can recall — can always be changed to suit the whims or expediencies of the moment. As is about to happen — if Spady, Simonds, et al. come to some sort of a "compromise" on OBE. What the social engineers will *not* allow to be compromised, however, is the mastery learning/OBE method to which UNESCO and the U.S. Department of Education have been committed for at least 25 years. Education Secretaries Terrel Bell, William Bennett, Lamar Alexander, and Richard Riley have all supported OBE mastery learning with grants to develop and implement it nationwide.

Tony Stone Images

The computer, with its potential for immediate reinforcement, is a valuable tool in Skinnerian/OBE programs

Why? Because the bottom line, as usual, is global profits and global control for the globalists of the planned new world order. Because to those imbued with the current collectivist/humanist/behaviorist *zeitgeist* there is no more effective way to "train" workers than using mastery learning/programed learning, which is based on the Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov's animal experimentation and the late Harvard Professor B.F. Skinner's behavior modification techniques. That is, it is based on the operant conditioning, stimulus-response techniques used in rat, dog and pigeon training laboratories: "Sit, Fido, sit."; Fido sits — "Good dog, Fido." Pop a biscuit into Fido's mouth and move on to the next skill. If Fido doesn't sit, he may be punished with a shock before being recycled through the exercise again (and again) until he exhibits the desired behavior.

"Stimulus, Response"

This is the kind of conditioning that is outlined in the OBE manual entitled *Effective Schooling Practices: A Research Synthesis, 1990 Update*. Developed and published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon, this document is in use in hundreds of schools. Under its section entitled "Incentives and Rewards," *Effective Schooling Practices* states the following:

> a. Excellence is defined by objective standards, not by peer comparison. Systems are set up in the classroom for frequent and consistent rewards to students for academic achievement and excellent behavior.
>
> b. Rewards are appropriate to the

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developmental level of students and may include symbolic, token, tangible, or activity rewards.

c. All students know about the rewards and what they need to do to get them. Rewards are chosen because they appeal to students....

e. Some rewards are presented publicly; some are immediately presented, while others are delayed to teach persistence.

f. Students earn some rewards individually; others are earned by groups of students, as in some cooperative learning structures.

To those unfamiliar with behaviorist psychology, the above excerpt may sound innocuous. But to those acquainted with B.F. Skinner's behaviorist pseudo-science the document is easily recognizable as a program for conditioning students as if they were animals. Unfortunately, this document is far from being unique; hundreds of similar training manuals, teacher guides, curriculum frameworks, etc., produced with federal and state tax dollars, have flooded our schools.

What kind of human beings do the government schools wish to produce with these programs? After 12 years of systematic "rewards" (and penalties), will your children ever do something just for the intrinsic value of doing something they consider to be necessary, good, or simply beautiful? Or will there be anyone left willing to take an unpopular or controversial stand in opposition to the prevailing, politically correct sentiment if no reward is forthcoming and punishment is certain? Such training is highly suitable to training a docile workforce, but hardly conducive to preparing children for responsible citizenship in a free society.

The Computer Age

Ironically, the same modern computer technology that offers such wonderful potential for genuine learning is being hijacked by the educational behaviorists to subvert education. Dr. Skinner said, "I could make a pigeon a high achiever by reinforcing it on a proper schedule." The computer, with its built-in, immediate Skinnerian reinforcement, in conjunction with individual education plans and management information systems (management by objectives, or MBO), is the perfect tool for monitoring and reinforcing behavior "on a proper schedule."

A major stumbling block to efficient implementation of Skinnerian-based mastery learning/OBE programs in the past has been the practical problem of expecting a single teacher/trainer effectively and continuously to monitor and reinforce the behaviors of a classroom full of students. But computer trends are solving that problem: Falling computer costs, together with accelerating computer operational speeds and increasingly sophisticated software, are making automated monitoring and reinforcement of individualized instruction (read conditioning) a classroom reality. Hence the big push by the education establishment to equip classrooms with computers for each child — even as the same classrooms turn out record numbers of illiterates.

Skinner's atheist-humanist philosophy is the foundation for present-day OBE

For the utopian behaviorists, the computer is the indispensable instrument for attitudinal adjustment and global workforce training. Thomas Sticht, president of Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Inc. in San Diego, California and a member of the U.S. Department of Labor's SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills), referred to such training when he said in 1987:

> Many companies have moved operations to places with cheap, relatively poorly educated labor. What may be crucial, they say, is the dependability of a labor force and how well it can be managed and trained — not its general educational level, although a small cadre of highly educated creative people is essential to innovation and growth.

Of particular interest is the fact that Thomas Sticht and William Spady, while working at the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, in 1977, served as consultants to the Washington, DC public school system when it implemented mastery learning. The August 1, 1977 *Washington Post* quoted DC's Associate Superintendent of Schools James Guines as saying that "the new curriculum was based on the work in behavioral psychology of Harvard University's B.F. Skinner, who developed teaching machines and even trained pigeons during World War II to pilot and detonate bombs and torpedoes." The Washington, DC program has been an enormous disaster by every academic, economic, and social measure.

Inner-City Failure

Instead of meeting with Bill Spady and Marjorie Ledell to discuss outrageous outcomes, the conservatives opposed to OBE should have met with officials in the U.S. Department of Education and demanded of them norm-referenced test scores of children in the inner cities who have been subjected to this dehumanizing, manipulative conditioning. *Education Week* reported on August 28, 1985 that Professor James Block, very influential in international and national mastery learning circles, said "he did not know of any major urban school system in the United States that had not adopted some kind of mastery-learning program."

At a 1983 mastery learning conference in Maine (which this writer attended), Dr. S. Alan Cohen, associate director of the Center for Outcomes-Based Education at the University of San Francisco, said: "In 1976 Block and Burns published in AERA [American Educational Research Association] research from around the world on mastery learning. UNESCO committed to mastery learning all over the world.... We have evaluated data worldwide."

If, as we are being told, mastery learning has been successful where implemented, why has there been such a silence regarding the test scores of inner-city children? The Chicago mastery learning program, which resulted in almost one-half of 39,500 students in the 1980 freshman class failing to graduate, was just the tip of the iceberg. The press coverage of the Chicago mastery learning disaster was so devastating to the behaviorists' plans that the media, which has been overwhelmingly supportive of OBE schemes, ceased publicizing results from all the other major urban school systems that adopted mastery learning.

The real desired outcome of the OBE elitists is a deliberately dumbed-down, easily managed and controlled global workforce of compliant automatons.

In the meantime, the social engineers wisely changed the mastery learning label to outcome-based education (OBE). Although "accountability" is one of their pet buzzwords, the name change was made precisely to avoid being held accountable for their failed experiments. And their experiments have been far from inconsequential. The Summary of the *National Evaluation of the Follow Through Findings, 1970-1976*, an extensive survey of mastery-learning programs, states:

> Gary McDaniels, who designed the final Follow Through evaluation plan for the U.S. Office of Education, characterized Follow Through, which involves 180 cooperating communities, as *the largest and most expensive social experiment ever launched* [emphasis added].

That's pretty big. Yet, an examination of the *Follow Through Findings* on programs which used mastery learning indicates that they did not improve inner-city children's academic test scores. In fact, they had a devastatingly *negative* impact. Additional proof of the failure of ML/OBE programs can be found in the *pro*-OBE report *Models of Instructional Organization: A Casebook on Mastery Learning and Outcome-Based Education* (April 1987), compiled by Robert Burns, project director of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. The conclusion of the *Casebook* states, in part: "The four models of instructional organization outlined in this casebook are difficult programs to implement. The practices of the ten schools described in the case studies are indeed commendable. *Yet we do not offer these ten case studies as exemplary schools deserving emulation*" (emphasis added). And for good reason: These "commendable" schools have been embarrassing debacles.

Missing the Main Point

Why then is the U.S. Department of Education recommending the use of outcome-based education when its own research suggests that the most well-known OBE/mastery learning schools do not deserve emulation? How many school board members, teachers, or parents are aware of the research detailing the colossal failures of mastery learning? Had they been informed about this years ago, OBE indoctrination would not have swept the nation as it unfortunately has. And if parents understood the truly insidious nature of OBE, they would make no compromises whatsoever with its devious practitioners and promoters.

What most opponents of OBE have focused on are the "outrageous outcomes" typical of so many OBE programs. For religious parents that usually means those areas of the curriculum and testing in the "affective domain" that challenge eternal verities, promote moral relativism, and advance the sexual revolution (premarital and extra-marital sex, homosexuality, abortion, etc.) while undermining parental authority, the family, and patriotism. They are upset, and rightly so, by mandated outcomes like this one for Oklahoma students in grades 9-12: "The student will develop communication skills, including being able to talk with one's actual or potential partner about sexual behavior." Others are equally troubled by the OBE "cognitive domain" emphasis on group learning activities, non-graded classes, and mushy, fuzzy academic objectives (outcomes) at the expense of traditional subject matter and basic reading, writing, and computing skills. This Pennsylvania OBE outcome is typical: "All students will make environmentally sound decisions in their personal and civic lives."

However, parents and conservative leaders who think they are winning a great victory by getting OBE leaders like Spady and Ledell to "enhance" OBE and remove objectionable outcomes will one day rue their naiveté.* The OBE educrats will grudgingly concede to temporarily change the content — as long the process, the method, and the system are not affected.

Unfortunately, most OBE opponents see only the obviously objectionable *content* and ignore the more subtly sinister Skinnerian *process*. Some are aware that Dr. Skinner was a militant atheist-humanist (a signer of the *Humanist Manifesto* and a winner of the "Humanist of the Year" award) and that he made some astonishingly totalitarian statements. What they don't seem to realize is that his whole philosophy and epistemology, which undergird OBE, are profoundly totalitarian in orientation and irredeemably hostile to Christian morality and individual liberty.

The real desired outcome of the OBE elitists is a deliberately dumbed-down, easily managed and controlled global workforce of compliant automatons. Any compromise with these totalitarian mind controllers is a bargain with evil and a sellout of our children's birthright of freedom. ■

— CHARLOTTE T. ISERBYT

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* Like Skinner, Dr. Spady sees "religious orthodoxy," "fundamentalism," and "conservatism" as the great evils in the world today. In his report for the Department of Defense, "Ensuring the Success of All students Today for Tomorrow's Changing World," Spady writes: "Despite the historical trend toward intellectual enlightenment and cultural pluralism, there has been a major rise in religious and political orthodoxy, intolerance, fundamentalism, and conservativism with which young people will have to be prepared to deal." Those whom Spady views as representatives of "orthodxoy, intolerance, fundamentalism, and conservativism" would do well to consider that the "olive branch" being extended to them may conceal a dagger.

Traditionalist Christians and OBE: What's the Problem?

Arnold Burron

Outcome-based education remains a sore spot with many Traditionalist Christians. Some insights into their position may suggest options for addressing potential conflicts.

Any attempt to speak for Christians on any point of controversy may just lend credence to the adage "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Christians—even so-called Fundamentalist Christians—no more speak with one voice than do Hispanics, African Americans, or any other identifiable group. Nevertheless, as a Traditionalist Christian and a university professor who has presented public school informational seminars to Traditionalist Christians throughout the United States, I would like to offer some insights about the "Religious Right" that may be of help to public school educators.

What Educators Should Know

Public educators appear to be woefully ignorant of Traditionalist Christians' belief in *supersessionism,* the belief in the exclusivity of Christianity that states that only through faith in Jesus Christ's atonement can eternal salvation be attained. This belief has a profound influence on how this group of Christians responds to OBE.

If Christianity is the only true religion, assert Traditionalist Christians, then any element of the curriculum that propounds that all religions are equally valid and acceptable—as opposed to teaching that all people have an equally valid and acceptable *right to practice* whatever religion they choose—threatens the eternal well-being of their children. Further, because they believe that their eternal well-being is more important than any temporal tranquillity, they will relentlessly oppose any attempts to deprecate their concerns about what they see as the public schools' insidious inculcation of universalism.

Public educators may disagree with this exclusivity; nonetheless, supersessionism is the sine qua non of the Traditionalist Christian viewpoint and the source of almost all Traditionalist criticisms of the curriculum. Any aspect of public schooling that detracts from this belief or from the moral values associated with it will evoke opposition. Knowing this fact could help public educators respond to challenges sensitively and judiciously.

Although Traditionalist Christians agree that OBE contradicts their values, there is no consensus on the specific elements of OBE to which they object.

A second important point to consider is that Traditionalist Christians link topics as diverse as the debate over whole language versus synthetic phonics, multicultural education, social services on campus, and site-based management to OBE. For example, the lack of structure in the whole language philosophy appears to be consistent with what they see as deliberate attempts by restructuring proponents to achieve ambiguously stated objectives in OBE.[1] Traditionalist Christians respond emotionally to these issues, and because they fail to prioritize their relative importance, they treat whole language phonics with the same gravity as, say, globalism: all are "subversive." Public educators should be aware that apparently minor issues may be seen as significant because of their perceived ties to OBE.

Closely related to the failure to discriminate among issues is the fact that some Traditionalist Christians are not well-informed about specific details of issues. Neither their public school administrators nor their Christian leaders have presented them with a balanced analysis of the issues. Public school educators may find themselves attempting to explain something that their audience may not have the background to understand. Again using whole language versus phonics as an example, many of these Christians will either not know about the different kinds of phonics approaches, or they will have been programmed to reject any attempt to teach reading using an analytic approach. Approaches that do not have a clearly defined scope and sequence, they believe, lead to nebulous goals and subjective outcomes.

Most Traditionalist Christians, however, are eager to learn, and they

Traditionalist Christians fear that their children's advocacy of moral absolutes will detrimentally affect their grades and academic placement.

have been receptive to presentations that challenged their most cherished notions, provided that they see the presentations as objective. If they believe that public educators will listen, they also welcome suggestions on how to diplomatically present their concerns. Unfortunately, experience has led them to anticipate that they will be stonewalled and their concerns will be disparaged. Educators seem neither to desire nor respect their input. As a result, they often resort to aggressively presenting their concerns.

Although Traditionalist Christians agree that OBE contradicts their values, there is no consensus on the specific elements of OBE to which they object. Participants at my presentations have raised a number of points that could be summarized in two major concerns: they object to affective emphases in content courses, and they oppose the covert indoctrination of social, political, and economic values.

Concerns About Affective Goals

An objective from *Maine's Common Core of Learning* illustrates how a seemingly benign objective, if couched in ambiguous terminology, can evoke controversy:

> Students with a common core of knowledge work cooperatively and actively in group decision making, whether in small groups or in the larger society; are able to listen, share opinions, negotiate, compromise, and help the group reach consensus.

Traditionalist Christians challenge this objective because it seems to promote relativism as a desirable goal. They object to fostering the abilities to "compromise" and "reach consensus" when such practices could lead in certain situations to capitulation to group pressure or to approval of behaviors that a Traditionalist interpretation of Christian Scriptures prohibits, such as homosexuality. They fear that their children's advocacy of moral absolutes, which preclude their having an attitude of "tolerance" or other secularly sanctioned "virtues," will detrimentally affect their children's grades and academic placement. They believe that their children will have to demonstrate politically correct behaviors, and that the goals, processes (such as group problem solving and cooperative learning), and evaluations used in OBE deliberately attempt to undermine their children's values, individuality, and commitment to personal responsibility.

Both public educators and Traditionalist Christians need to understand one another's perspectives on the question of ambiguous, affective outcomes. Most Traditionalist Christians, when presented with hypothetical situations that illustrate how their children are affected by classmates who do not know how to achieve peaceful compromise, begin to understand why such OBE objectives have been formulated. Yet I have found no evidence of an equal level of understanding on the part of public educators regarding the concerns many of these Christians have about formalizing affective goals. How many educators understand that many Traditionalist Christians view a goal such as Maine's "Have a basic understanding of the changing roles and rights of women and men" as being diametrically opposed to their belief that the husband is the head of the house and the wife is the helpmeet who is to submit to the husband's authority? How many educators would attempt to accommodate this concern?

Concerns About Indoctrination

In addition to concerns about affective objectives, Traditionalist Christians believe schools using OBE are indoctrinating children with social, political, and economic values in subjects such as science, health, social studies, and the visual and performing arts. Environmentalism, globalism, and multiculturalism are supplanting ideas such as the prudent utilization of resources, "my-country-right-or-wrong" patriotism, and America the melting pot. Many of the views presented on political issues such as gun control, abortion, homosexual activism, and the welfare state violate deeply held Traditionalist Christian beliefs.

Traditionalist Christians have, for some time, asserted that indoctrination has been occurring within traditional education, but OBE exacerbates their concern. OBE, they say, makes covert indoctrination overt. Ambiguously worded objectives legitimize the politicization of the classroom and the curriculum, and they sanction educators to "come out of the closet" with political perspectives antithetical to those embraced by most of these Christians—perspectives students will be held accountable to when demonstrating various outcomes.

Concerns About Process

In addition to these two major concerns, the process by which OBE and other restructuring initiatives have been adopted disturbs Traditionalist Christians. Many of them feel manipulated or disenfranchised by their public servants, some of whom they perceive as duplicitous or dishonest.

Public schools could offer courses that focus solely upon values and that unambiguously specify their objectives and the measurable outcomes.

For example, one state legislator approached me at a restructuring seminar and showed me an invitation he had received to an institute at Harvard University on reform in public education. A session-by-session analysis of the agenda could be the subject of a whole article on why the process of achieving reform angers Traditionalist Christians, particularly as it relates to OBE. The description of the last formal presentation of the conference says:

> The most difficult part of systemic reform is not in finding consensus with each other ... the hardest task may be in "selling" the package to the public.... This session examines how legislators can package education reform and offers suggestions for dealing with vocal opposition groups.

The conference sponsors appear to assume that legislators, presumably invited to discuss the need for and the nature of reform, will buy into all the reforms presented, that consensus will be achieved, that the specifics of the reforms will need to be "packaged" and "sold" to the public, and that opposition will be stifled. Traditionalist Christians have too frequently noted a similar arrogance on the part of their public school administrators when they implement OBE.

Some Suggested Solutions

To address the concerns of Traditionalist Christians and reduce the conflict between them and public educators over OBE, I offer several suggestions. First, public schools could offer courses that focus *solely* upon values and that *unambiguously* specify their objectives and the measurable outcomes. Courses such as "Leadership and Group Dynamics," "Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution," and "Cooperative Decision Making" could be taught by civic, corporate, and other leaders and offered on an "opt-out" basis. Thus, no group would be able to assert that a hidden agenda is subverting its value system, and necessary affective objectives could be addressed openly in the OBE curriculum.

Second, by offering clearly designated "critical issues" courses, schools could address concerns about covert or overt indoctrination. The primary content of such courses would be issues analysis or problem solving, using an approach such as the Issues Analysis Procedure[2] and a curriculum emphasizing critical reading and thinking skills. Such a curriculum would replace the teaching of so-called higher-order thinking skills, which most Traditionalist Christians view as the affective, covert values-clarification agenda of OBE.

Critical issues courses would examine major political, economic, and social issues identified by a cross section of public school clients. The most visible proponents and opponents of an issue would present students with a spectrum of opinions. OBE objectives would be clear, measurable academic outcomes emphasizing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students would complete a formal written analysis of each issue that would incorporate research based on speakers' presentations and that would not have to conform to the political leanings of their instructors. Such a format would avoid charges of indoctrination or of failure to teach legitimate cognitive higher-order thinking skills.

Third, a forum that emphasizes dialogue rather than debate would address the concern about the process of adoption. I have found that in my seminars—a simulated dialogue of sorts—even the most emotional factions have been willing to listen to reason. A debate format seems only to make people more defensive of their positions. Public information seminars in various school districts provided by presenters agreed upon by a majority of Traditionalist Christians and public educators could address not only controversy about OBE, but concerns about other issues as well.

Those who would presume to receive the benediction "Blessed are the peacemakers"—Traditionalist Christians—and those who presume to teach conflict resolution skills—public educators—have failed to achieve either peace or resolution. Public forums would be a starting point toward an attainable goal: consensus on what constitutes a good education for America's children. ■

[1] A helpful resource presenting issues of concern to Traditionalist Christians is *Reinventing America's Schools*, published by Citizens for Excellence in Education, Box 3200, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

[2] To obtain a treatise on the Issues Analysis Procedure, contact Arnold Burron at the address below.

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DISPELLING THE MYTHS ABOUT OUTCOME-BASED REFORMS

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Outcome-Based Education (OBE) seems to be a phenomenon of the Nineties. Until about three years ago, few people had heard of it. Of those who had, most were either educators or instructors in places like the business world, technical programs, flight schools, ski schools, the military, or music conservatories. Some of them commonly used the term **"Competency-Based"** to describe their approach to teaching and assessing their students. Others called it **"Performance-Based."**

Regardless of the term used, the essence of their work was largely consistent with the thinking and practices that are called "Outcome-Based" today. To instructors in these fields, being Outcome-Based meant developing a clear focus on what was essential for their learners to be able to do successfully, and then applying good common sense in finding and designing ways for them to get there. These instructors directly assessed their learners' performances on exactly the things they told them and taught them were most important. And they didn't consider either the learners or themselves "done" until the learners could demonstrate the intended outcome, or performance, successfully. Grades, credit, advancement to a new curriculum level, and/or final credentials and certification were all directly tied to these successful demonstrations. Their general rule:

> **The more important or critical the learning, the more Outcome-Based the instructional strategies should be.**

This was the simple and straightforward world of OBE to those of us who ever got a Merit Badge or Honor Badge in the Scouts, who earned a Lifesaving or CPR Certificate, who got a Driver's or a

Pilot's License, who earned a belt in karate, who got a technical assignment in the military, who passed the Medical Boards or the Bar Exam, or who passed the music conservatory's performer exams. While it may not have been called OBE at the time, the instruction we received was focused on and organized around having us develop clearly defined competencies. The certificates of accomplishment we received clearly reflected our successful demonstration of those competence standards. The great irony was that these highly effective, common sense ideas were not very prevalent in public schools -- the one place where their application seemed so badly needed.

The Changing World of Outcome-Based Education

But things are different today. Suddenly, tens of millions of us are hearing or reading about the term "Outcome-Based Education" in all forms of the mass media. OBE is now a widely discussed topic from local PTA meetings, to state legislative debates, to national radio talk shows. Unfortunately, most of the things we are hearing about it are serious misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and misrepresentations of what OBE actually is. As a result, Outcome-Based reforms of all kinds are under either suspicion or attack by a variety of groups, many of which seem intent on blocking progressive, success-oriented change in education altogether. Because these highly organized groups have been so effective at capturing media and political attention, educators, policy makers, and the public have been discussing very distorted versions of what Outcome-Based reforms are and represent.

Consequently, this paper is a deliberate attempt to set the record straight on what OBE actually stands for and is. It: 1) presents a simple picture of the components that make up an authentic Outcome-Based model, 2) describes the four major approaches to OBE implementation in the field, and 3) explicitly addresses six broad areas of criticism that have been leveled at OBE efforts by its most vocal critics. The ideas in this paper give educational leaders concerned with the fundamental reform and improvement of our K-12 educational system accurate information that they can bring to their publics in the face of this welter of distorted information.

The OBE efforts of today are a direct response to the many demands for change of what some call our outdated, "Industrial Age" system of educating children in an era of high technology, global communications, and rapidly expanding information systems. These changes involve fundamentally refocusing and redirecting our education system from an emphasis on means to an emphasis on ends, from procedures to purposes, from time spent to outcomes accomplished, from attendance requirements to standards reached, from roles of personnel to goals for learners, from teaching to learning, from programs to performance, from curriculum to results, and from courses taken to criteria met. Many groups in our society are demanding these changes just as loudly as other groups are actively resisting them. Needed educational reforms of all kinds are being held hostage in this struggle over the direction and control of our educational system.

The Components of Authentic Outcome-Based Systems

OBE is a comprehensive approach to focusing, defining, and organizing all aspects of the instructional and credentialing systems of schools. The instructional system includes things like goal setting, planning, curriculum, teaching, instructional tools and resources, and assessment of student learning. The credentialing system includes things like evaluation, grading, credit, record keeping and transcripts, reporting, promotion, and graduation standards. The key thing to remember is:

> **In an Outcome-Based system, all of these instructional and credentialing components are defined, focused, and organized around the clear demonstrations of learning that a system regards as essential for all of its students, not around the clock and calendar.**

What Exactly Are Outcomes?

Outcomes are CLEAR, OBSERVABLE DEMONSTRATIONS of student learning that occur at or after the end of a significant set of learning experiences. **They are NOT values, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, activities, assignments, goals, scores, grades, or averages, as many people believe.** Typically these demonstrations, or performances, will reflect three key things: 1) what the student knows; 2) what the student can actually DO with what he or she knows; and 3) the student's confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration. A well-defined outcome will have clearly defined content or concepts and a well defined demonstration process -- like explain, organize, or produce.

These "culminating demonstrations", or ultimate performances, can be defined and implemented in a variety of ways. They range from very discrete skills that are tied to specific kinds of curriculum content -- typical of school learning -- to very broad and complex performance abilities required of people in their life pursuits that can be applied in a wide variety of situations using a wide variety of content and concepts. In general, the broader and more complex the performance ability is, the more "significant" the outcome is likely to be for the student in the long run and the more it will require major changes in conventional approaches to curriculum design, instructional delivery, and the assessment and credentialing of student learning.

What Are the Purposes of Outcome-Based Systems?

Outcome-Based systems have clear purposes that reflect their philosophy. In the case of OBE, this philosophy clearly emphasizes "Success for All Students and Staff." There are no predefined limits on who or how many students can be successful, nor on how much they can learn or how rapidly they can advance. This positive, child-centered philosophy is reflected in OBE's two formal purposes:

> Ensuring that all students are equipped with the knowledge, competence, and qualities needed to be successful after they exit the educational system; and
>
> Structuring and operating schools so that those outcomes can be achieved for all students.

In a nutshell, these purposes are future-focused and success-oriented.

What Kind of Premises and Assumptions Underlie OBE?

The two purposes of Outcome-Based systems are based on three key assumptions, or premises, that are backed by a great deal of research and practice over the past thirty years. They are:

1. All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way;

2. **Successful learning promotes more successful learning; and**
3. **Schools control the conditions that directly affect successful school learning.**

These assumptions ask educators to take a positive view of all their students -- much like parents do -- focusing on their unique learning needs, rates, and characteristics; consistently emphasizing and building on their successes; and directly promoting successful learning and progress, rather than failure. The bottom line of these premises is that students can learn successfully in school if schools really focus, organize, and commit themselves to get that to happen.

What Principles Drive Outcome-Based Systems?

OBE implementers put these purposes and premises into practice by deliberately and consistently guiding what they do around four key principles. These four principles represent the heart of an OBE approach and work together to alter and improve the opportunities that teachers and students have for being successful. These four principles are called:

1. **CLARITY OF FOCUS** on Culminating Outcomes of Significance;
2. **EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY** and Support for Success;
3. **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** for All to Succeed; and
4. **DESIGN DOWN** from Your Ultimate Outcomes.

Since there are many ways that these principles can be defined and used in school settings, it makes little sense to talk about implementing "THE" one model of OBE. However, when educators consistently and simultaneously apply these principles in and across classrooms and schools, there is a distinctive character to the Outcome-Based practices we typically find.

First, the **Clarity of Focus** principle means that curriculum planners and teachers must have a clear focus on what they want their students ultimately to be able to do successfully. They then use those "culminating outcomes" as the consistent foundation for planning, teaching, assessing, grading, record keeping, and reporting student achievement and progress. This first principle asks staff to keep each student's ultimate learning success clearly in mind and make it, rather than getting the curriculum "covered," the paramount factor in teaching, assessment, and achievement. OBE staff and students always know what outcomes they are working toward, and why. More advanced OBE districts use the term "exit outcomes" to describe the ultimate end-of-schooling demonstrations of significance they want for all their students, and they plan and build their overall curriculum designs "down" or "back" from there.

Second, the **Expanded Opportunity** principle means that teachers and school staff must do everything possible to keep opportunities for continued learning and improvement open to students. This is done to encourage them to continue improving upon their initial performances and eventually be able to demonstrate the exit outcomes and the highest possible level. This can happen in a broad variety of ways, including what has come to be called "second chances" for demonstrating important outcomes successfully. Because this principle is based on the reality that not all learners learn equally fast or in the same way, OBE schools typically use time and instructional methods in a variety of flexible ways to best meet student learning needs. Therefore, OBE implementers adjust both the timing and methods of instruction to match what each learner can successfully do at a given point in time. Faster learners do not have to sit and wait for everyone to learn to do the same thing before they move on to more challenging tasks.

Third, the **High Expectations** principle means that staff must establish high, challenging standards of performance for students and be willing to ultimately hold them to those standards before accepting their performances as "final." This is reflected, for example, in the clear, high standards set by the Boy and Girl Scouts for receiving a Merit or Honor Badge, where the Scout must successfully demonstrate all of the criteria that constitute the badge before receiving it. OBE implementers learn to distinguish between defining and holding high learning and performance challenges for all their students, and student versus student competition -- which, in fact, discourages many from even trying in the first place. Note too that in many districts this principle has been the basis for eliminating remedial, "dead end" programs and courses from the curriculum and for giving all students greater learning challenges on a regular basis.

Fourth, OBE's **Design Down** principle means that staff must begin their curriculum and instructional planning by starting where they want students to "end up." Often this means starting at the end with the district's culminating exit outcomes of significance and building the curriculum and its essential building blocks of knowledge and competence back from there. Although this backward mapping strategy is technically much more difficult to do than covering conventional curriculum texts, it assures that students will have a clear path for getting to the ultimate outcomes and that the curriculum will focus on what is truly essential for getting there. Sometimes this systematic and logical process helps teachers recognize that some of what has been in their curriculum is not really the essential substance that students must learn and master. Their challenge: replacing these less essential things with those that really matter in the long run for students.

To summarize: what specific districts, schools, or programs look like or do as the result of pursuing OBE's two key Purposes and applying its four key Principles can vary enormously. The good news about this flexibility is that **OBE can be custom-designed to meet local needs and capabilities.** When that is done within the spirit and intent of the two purposes and four principles just described, improvements in student learning results can be very impressive. The bad news for OBE is that the four Principles, like any good innovation, can sometimes be applied in incomplete or inappropriate ways. These unfortunate applications both diminish the impact of the four principles as well as cause problems and dilemmas for which local educators often lack solutions. The likely result: Allegations that OBE doesn't work or only helps some students at the expense of others. The reality: Authentic OBE wasn't really in place and never had a chance to work.

The Four Faces of OBE in the Nineties

As we view the broad range of Outcome-Based reform and implementation efforts occurring across North America today, there appear to be four different configurations and applications of the Purposes, Premises, and Principles just described. It is useful to think of these four visible "faces" of OBE as:

* **Classroom Reform** -- which focuses on having individual teachers consistently apply the four Principles to what they are presently teaching in their classrooms.

- **Program Alignment** -- which brings the entire spectrum of a district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment components into tight congruence with each other through the four Principles.

- **External Accountability** -- which usually embodies state mandates for improved district performance involving explicit standards and the statewide use of standardized tests; and

- **System Transformation** -- which redirects and redefines a district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment components around the complex performance abilities needed by students in their adult lives.

While major differences in philosophy, substantive focus, curriculum design, instructional process, assessment techniques, and the application of the four Principles exist among these four faces of OBE, these important distinctions are blurred or lost in the current wave of controversy. In addition, some critics have compiled a long list of things they dislike about school reforms in general and indiscriminately called all of them "OBE." This list includes:

> Anything having to do with outcomes; anything called outcome-based, performance-based, or results-based; national standards, programs, and assessments; anything involving cooperative learning, collaborative projects, or learning teams; integrated or thematic curriculum designs; critical or constructivist thinking; social responsibility, social interaction, or anything else with the word "social" in it; anything related to attitudes and values, human psychology and development, or personal wellness; anything related to ungraded classrooms or schools, multi-age grouping, flexible grouping, flexible scheduling, or year-round schooling; the emerging arenas of authentic assessment, performance portfolios, and/or computer-based record keeping; anything related to multi-cultural or whole language instruction; learning styles; site-based management; and more.

The Issues Underlying Opposition to OBE

In the face of a blanket indictment this broad, it is almost impossible to specifically identify and address all of the issues that opposition groups raise about OBE, but they seem to fall into six broad overlapping areas:

The Nature of Outcomes
Control and Accountability
Philosophy and World View
Cost versus Effectiveness
Standards versus Success
Instructional Delivery and Opportunities

Associated with each issue is a mixture of overlapping allegations and criticisms that we have chosen to categorize as "myths" because they do not hold up in the face of accurate information about OBE theory and practice. We will consider them one at a time even though various themes are interwoven among the issues.

The Nature of Outcomes

Myth: Virtually all outcomes as defined by states and local districts concentrate on fuzzy psychological frames of mind, attitudes, and values at the expense of critical knowledge and measurable competence. Students will be tested and graded on their social attitudes and behavior, rather than on their knowledge and competence.

Reality: As noted earlier in the paper, Outcomes are culminating demonstrations of learning, not states of mind, personal values, or beliefs about specific issues. By definition, they involve and embody demonstrations of knowledge and competence. While it is impossible to conduct "value-free" schools or to have a value-free curriculum, it is possible to separate desired educational goals (that might involve things that fall into the affective and attitudinal arenas) from demonstrated competence. When correctly defined -- which in many cases they have not been -- outcomes should focus on the application of significant and useful knowledge, not on feelings, beliefs, or preferences. As in partisan political campaigns, the critics have chosen to highlight particularly poor examples of affective or attitudinal goals as being representative of **all** outcomes. This completely distorts the facts. The vast majority of all of the things that educators have ever called, or treated as, outcomes have involved academic learning.

Furthermore, experienced OBE implementers have never advocated testing or grading students on the substance of their personal values or positions taken in discussions or debates. However, how well students can explain the strengths and weaknesses of particular lines of argument or conclusions drawn from available evidence is a legitimate criterion for teachers to use in assessing their analytical thinking and complex problem solving abilities. Similarly, OBE implementers have characteristically made sharp distinctions between family and religious values that are very much personal matters and those broadly civic values such as honesty and fairness without which stable, democratic, community living would be impossible.

Finally, for an outcome to be measurable, it requires that clear, observable, **substantive** demonstration processes and criteria be defined and that objective assessors can agree on the presence or absence of those criteria when observing a demonstration of learning or performance. The critics err in believing that the term "measurable" is inherently about scores, percents, and grades. Quite to the contrary; scores and percents are simply numbers that assessors impose on a performance, and grades are vague labels based on one person's translation of these uninterpretable numbers into qualitative categories. Numbers simply do not and cannot embody the criteria or substance of the actual performance. Consequently, experienced Outcome-Based implementers urge assessors to focus on the substance of students' demonstrations, not on deriving numbers and scores that have no substantive meaning. The questions that is almost never asked or answered adequately in conventional grading circles is: **eighty percent of what?**

Control and Accountability

Myth: OBE is fundamentally a tool being used by states and the federal government to impose a globalist perspective on students and their families, undermine their value system, and coerce them into thinking and behaving in "politically correct" ways. Furthermore, the states are over-stepping their bounds by forcing students to learn and demonstrate particular things as conditions for promotion or graduation.

Reality: Authentic OBE has always been a local matter. Throughout the Seventies and Eighties, OBE implementation was almost exclusively handled, literally without incident, by district boards of education and district staff. The Classroom Reform and Program Alignment approaches to OBE described earlier were almost exclusively entrusted to staff to design and implement without any form of organized political opposition. With the emergence of the System Transformation approach in the late Eighties, its implementers began to insist on having extensive community involvement in the mission-setting and outcome-defining processes of each district because community input and support were recognized in both principle and practice as essential to the success of implementation endeavors. This precedent of directly involving large numbers of community stakeholders in the OBE direction setting and design processes has been carried out consistently for the past several years by implementers of the System Transformation approach, using the Strategic Design Process described earlier. These precedents and practices directly contradict the allegation that OBE is inherently state or nationally driven.

Paradoxically, however, state policies regarding the accreditation of schools and the credentialing and graduation of students have been major obstacles to the local implementation of OBE. The reasons revolve around the time-based/calendar-driven legal definitions that all states have applied to virtually all aspects of school programs and operations. Everything about the educational system has been legally constituted and regulated to last a specific amount of time (usually nine months without exception), including the definition of courses, the basis for Carnegie units of credit, and the grading system that supports them. Serious Outcome-Based implementers have always run into those inflexible time-based institutional barriers and had to compromise outcome standards to the schedule and calendar again and again. With time-based state regulations in the way, locals couldn't be fully Outcome-Based if they tried.

That is why the External Accountability approach being pursued by so many states in the Nineties has been met with such mixed reactions by local OBE implementers. On the one hand, they recognize the state's inherent jurisdiction over the student credentialing and school accreditation arenas, and they seek Outcome-Based alternatives to what has traditionally existed.

Consequently, local OBE implementers welcome those state initiatives that attempt to replace or supplement existing time-based/Carnegie Unit/curriculum requirements and accreditation standards with something that focuses more directly on demonstrated student learning. However, when those performance standards turned out to be poorly defined or imbedded in the same limiting organizational, curriculum, and testing models as before, these state policy changes were rightfully viewed by local implementers as mixed blessings at best. Since these state reform efforts also brought out droves of highly organized and outspoken OBE opponents down on their heads during 1993, the blessings became overwhelmingly negative for many, many local OBE districts.

Philosophy and World View

Myth: OBE represents a politically correct, global, "New Age," socialist philosophy and world view that violates the beliefs and values of American families and mandates dangerous thinking and influences into the system and its classrooms.

Reality: While on the surface OBE's chief critics and opponents seem unified on all of these philosophy and world view issues, their perspectives are, in fact, fairly diverse. One place to start in coming to grips with this issue is by carefully reading the articles by Robert Marzanno and by Robert Simonds in the January, 1994 issue of ***Educational Leadership***, and the article by Arnold Burron in the March, 1994 issue. Marzanno goes into explicit detail documenting the basis of some of the most extreme critic's anti-"New Age" perspectives and lists a host of individuals, institutions, and everyday practices that have been labeled New Age by the writers whose thinking represents many critics' viewpoints most articulately. What challenges the thinking of one who does not share this anti-New Age perspective, is how radically different this view of life and living is from that of the "secular humanists" (i.e., people who do not share what Marzanno calls their "ultra-fundamentalist" views) that make up the bulk of American society.

The Simonds article conveys the thinking, motivation, and goals of what has been one of the most outspoken of the OBE critics. Simonds and his Citizens for Excellence in Education colleagues have been responsible for providing conservative groups across the country with a good deal of the information and strategies needed to question and criticize the broad range of things listed earlier under the Critics' Choice definition of OBE. While Simonds seems to have no overt objections to the Purposes and Principles of OBE, it is its tangible implementation that has him so concerned. His organization has been a beacon for those who believe that OBE policy and practice need to be viewed extremely skeptically for their implicit and explicit endorsement of globalist and socialist ideas and practices that can be used to control and warp the minds of children.

Burron, a respected colleague of Simonds, makes clear in his article exactly which tenants "Traditionalist Christians" will not compromise and provides examples of things that seem perfectly harmless from a secular point of view but which deeply threaten their beliefs. It is examples of this kind, he argues, that have fueled the fires of reaction against OBE -- not because OBE itself is inherently anti-Christian or anti-conservative -- but because those using it as a vehicle for reform are encumbering it with substance that significant numbers find objectionable.

The ultimate issue that surfaces here relates to the capacity of a single institution, the school or school system, to develop policies and priorities expressed as "outcomes for students" that are broad enough to allow for variability and choice among the institution's constituents. The imposition of a single, "one size fits all" approach looks like a sure-fire guarantee of continued political and philosophical controversy, but that has been the nature of educational policy making forever. There is emerging evidence that the controversy would cool if legitimate alternatives could surface that would guarantee quality learning by all students around a core of critical knowledge and competence, while encouraging differences in terms of substance and detail in other areas of the curriculum.

Cost versus Effectiveness

Myth: There is no valid research which proves that OBE works. In the face of its outrageous implementation costs, OBE is no more than an expensive experiment in social engineering that wastes tax dollars and damages our educational system and its best students.

Reality: The assertions made here are radically different from the experiences of thousands of OBE practitioners. To make their case the critics have had to 1) ignore all of the everyday examples provided at the outset of this paper; 2) dismiss as "self-serving propaganda" the work, successes, and writings of many OBE teachers, schools, and districts; 3) ignore the major distinctions among the four different faces of OBE implementation described earlier; and 4) comb the country for worst-case examples of what they have called "OBE practice" and represent those examples as the whole of OBE. In other words, they have chosen to place OBE in the worst possible light and to ignore the successes that have been the foundation of its credibility and growth among practitioners over the past fifteen years.

Beginning in the late Seventies, a small number of schools and districts began to share information about the successes they were having with the Classroom Reform approach to OBE. The visibility they received at state, regional, and national conferences created considerable attention, and others began to emulate what they were doing. By 1980 an organization called the Network for Outcome-Based Schools was formed and began offering conferences and workshops of its own. Since that time the numbers of schools and districts that have been attracted to the impressive body of classroom, school, and district evidence that has accumulated has grown enormously, only because data, testimonials, and tangible practices were there for them to observe and learn from.

Several schools and districts have stood out at one time or another since 1979 as examples worthy of emulation. Johnson City, NY; Red Bank, NJ; Glendale (AZ) Union High School District; Township High School District 214 in Arlington Heights, IL; the Lucia Mar Unified Schools in Arroyo Grande, CA; Alhambra High School in Phoenix; the Center School in New Canaan, CT; and Southridge Middle School in Fontana, CA have all served as examples and inspirations for countless practitioners because they were able to document major improvements in the following kinds of achievement results:

* National standardized tests in the basic skills;
* State tests in basic skills and subject areas;
* Locally designed criterion referenced tests on key objectives across the curriculum;
* The numbers and percentages of students pursuing honors and Advanced Placement programs;
* The percentage of students taking and passing Advanced

Placement exams for college credit;

- The number of National Merit Finalists;
- The numbers attaining "Highest Honors Graduate" status;
- The numbers taking the ACT and SAT examinations;
- ACT and SAT score averages; and
- The numbers applying to and attending post-secondary institutions after high school.

To the critics this impressive body of evidence has no merit because it has not been "nationally validated through controlled experimental research." To them, nothing less will constitute "proof." This leaves today's educators and policy makers in an incredible bind for four key reasons.

First, the critics' argument assumes that there is some absolute uniformity in OBE implementation that makes "controlled conditions" feasible to implement and measure. Second, it would take a huge national effort to organize the implementation and documentation of these "controlled models" that they want studied--something that the research and practitioner communities would have to jointly coordinate on a major scale. Third, critics would be the last to allow anything so large and nationally organized to occur. Fourth, since the outcome frameworks of almost all states and districts differ from each other, finding a common set of outcomes on which to compare models would be very difficult -- unless, of course, the research were to fall into the convenient trap of relying on nationally normed standardized test scores in the basic skills and assuming that they measure more complex and important aspects of students' learning and achievement.

Regarding the matter of costs, the critics have made accusations and used figures that no experienced OBE implementer can comprehend. Their claims regarding per-pupil and total district costs are so far beyond known examples and credible possibilities that the basis and rationale for their numbers is a total mystery. What is true, however, is that fully developed models of OBE require significant retraining of personnel, redesign of the delivery system, and retooling of its curriculum, instruction, assessment, and credentialing components. These front-end costs will not be cheap, but they can be phased in over time as an investment in overhauling a system that has not met the needs of many of its student and taxpaying clients and has operated without significant change for over a century.

But an essential must be stated: **it costs no more on a day to day basis** to operate a highly effective OBE school or district than a less effective traditional one, and the schools and districts cited above can speak directly to that fact. But OBE does require a wiser allocation of available funds, resources, and personnel -- which many successful implementers are happy to describe to those interested. To them the "Cost versus Effectiveness" comparison makes OBE look like a stunning alternative to what we now spend and what we get for our investment. To tax-conscious citizens, OBE may be the best educational bargain on the block -- unless, of course, they're holding out for state-supported vouchers for private schools.

Standards versus Success

Myth: Since OBE insists on creating success for all students, it does so by lowering standards to a level that the poorest students can reach. This leads to "dumbing down" the curriculum and impedes the opportunities for greater challenge that the more advanced students deserve.

Reality: OBE has always stood for high expectations and standards. Serious Outcome-Based efforts object to lowering either standards or expectations for what students can eventually accomplish. This myth might be valid if three things were true, but in well-implemented OBE systems they are not. First, the four Principles would be absent. There would be no Clarity of Focus driving a Design Down curriculum framework, nor High Expectations linked to Expanded Opportunity instructional and assessment strategies. But that is not the case. The four Principles are present and work together to transform the conditions that directly affect teacher effectiveness and student learning. The kinds of achievements described in the previous section abound.

Second, the instructional delivery system and strategies of teachers would have to compel all students to be doing exactly the same things at the same time and allow no flexibility in time or timing -- just like the typical Industrial Age model of delivery does. Faster students would be compelled to wait for slower students and would be challenged to do only what the latter can do on any given day. This is absolutely NOT what happens in well-designed OBE classrooms.

Third, the relationship between standards and success would have to follow a pattern similar to that of a **teeter-totter**, which is apparently what the critics assume. That metaphor dictates that standards and success are direct opposites and that success is gained at the expense of standards, and vice-versa. If that were true, and it is not, the only way to increase one would be to decrease the other -- which is exactly the opposite of what OBE strives to achieve. Instead of the teeter-totter, OBE implementation is guided by the metaphor of a **criterion-based elevator** that is powered by the four Principles. The elevator is used to raise the levels of achievement, learning, challenge, and success for all students without impeding the progress of either faster or slower students. There are countless examples of OBE in the classroom in which teachers report virtually all students advancing far beyond their own previous levels, or those of equivalent groups of students in previous years. This is routinely accomplished without the successes of some negatively affecting the successes of others because the standards toward which they are working are not comparatively or competitively defined.

Instructional Delivery and Opportunities

Myth: In its desire to equalize the achievements of all students, OBE delivery retards the pace and level of instruction and compels faster, more advanced students to spend their time helping lower, less motivated achievers at the expense of their own advancement.

Reality: This myth is closely related to the previous one, so keeping the teeter-totter and elevator metaphors in mind will definitely help. One of the key issues here is that many OBE practitioners make deliberate attempts to create active learning communities in their classrooms and promote a variety of challenging pursuits for teams of learners. This, they find, improves the attention and motivation of almost all students, directly enhances the learning climate in the classroom, and enables groups of students to take on large, complex projects that individual students could not hope to accomplish on their own. In addition, they deliberately expand the traditionally short opportunity structures that characterize most school work so that students have the time necessary for developing high level skills. Active learning classrooms of this kind do not expect or require all students to be doing exactly the same assignment at the same level on the same day, which seems to be the assumption underlying the critics' concerns.

However, conducting team-focused work is not an attempt to compel students to interact with others whom they don't like against their will, or to spend all of their time tutoring others instead of doing their own work. **Neither represents sound OBE implementation.** All classroom life, OBE or not, brings students of diverse backgrounds and characteristics together in an intense social setting. The only dynamic that OBE adds to that situation is the philosophical commitment to expect each student within that mix to -- and to give each student every opportunity to -- develop the same high level skills that the highest achievers in the class have traditionally attained.

Nor should the concept of Expanded Opportunity be viewed as license to do as little as possible on a time schedule that the slowest students set. The Expanded Opportunity Principle offers teachers and students maximum flexibility in organizing instructional delivery arrangements, curriculum, and schedules so that students are working on tasks appropriate to their skill levels for the greatest amount of time possible. It also encourages staff to view time, instructional methods, materials, and personnel as flexible resources to be used in the smartest ways possible, without putting all students on the same inflexible Industrial Age assembly-line structure, schedule, and constraints as every other student. However, since some parents and educators have a great need for highly structured delivery and opportunity structures and strategies, for them this otherwise sensible strategy of using staff and student time and talent more flexibly is inherently objectionable. The key for teachers is to keep all four Principles operating actively and in balance with each other, especially the High Expectations-Expanded Opportunity dynamic. This is possible in all kinds of classroom configurations, not just the static lecture and seat work patterns of the past.

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From Theory to Practice: Classroom Application of Outcome-Based Education

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Though Outcome-Based education must involve administrators, educators, parents and students, ultimately it is the classroom teacher who is the key to the success of the program. The most basic premise of Outcome-Based education (OBE) states that all students are capable of learning and can achieve high levels of competency when teachers delineate their expectations. Because I do this, students feel they are participants in classroom decisions and tend to be more supportive of all aspects of the class. Thus, one of the main objectives of OBE is met as students and staff both take responsibility for successful learning outcomes.

Any teacher involved with OBE must be able to evaluate the effectiveness of his/her own classroom strategies. To facilitate this, the rest of the article offers the reader my classroom experience implementing OBE. There are many aspects of OBE interfacing in my classroom:

(1) Both staff and students take responsibility for successful learning.
(2) Objectives are clearly defined.
(3) Students have choices and options, thus they usually perform at higher levels of competency.
(4) Instructional levels are determined after complete assessment of student mastery.
(5) Students are given the opportunity to gain from others and to build a hierarchy of learning skills.
(6) Evaluation by both peers and instructors is ongoing.
(7) Time is varied for learning according to the needs of each student and the complexity of the task.

(8) Students are given the opportunity to work with core and alternative curriculum.

(9) All students are ensured the opportunity for personal success.

In this article I will focus on encouraging responsible parental participation, creating a student community of readers and writers, forming cooperative learning groups, and administering appropriate assessment. I conclude with a discussion of alternate curricular materials and a few overview suggestions.

My personal teaching experience encompasses all levels of reading students. The schedule has advanced placement, honors, college preparatory and basic/general students. English Secondary Language students, Learning Disability and physically handicapped students are also included. Usually the basic/general students are grouped as a class, but all others are integrated into heterogeneous groups. Many nationalities are represented in my classes and multi-cultural emphasis is part of my cirriculum. Meeting the needs of the student population can be a challenge, but it is accomplished by planning, perspective, and teaching strategies such as the following.

PARENTS ARE PARTNERS

From the very first moments of the class meeting, students are given a projected outline of the clearly defined class objectives, some guidelines for success in the course, the grading system and my general philosophy of teaching. Several class meetings later, students have some input on some of the important decisions in the classroom milieu. The outline given to the students serves as a letter of introduction to the parents. The letter is taken home after the first class meeting, and parents and students sign this as an affirmation of what is expected of everyone and also what is being addressed in the course. By the upbeat nature of the letter, I convey my sense of mission as well as my commitment to all students doing well in the course.

My voice mail number, my home telephone number, and the school telephone number with my conference period are given to students and parents indicating my availability to them as well as giving them the opportunity to be able to reach me at all times for any student or parent needs. This simple act confirms that we are all a team, and it gives the parents and students responsibility for contacting me for any reason. Additionally, an open invitation to visit the classroom is extended .

My planbook holds a list of student home/parent/business telephone numbers. If a student is absent for several days, if a student did an outstanding performance on anything in the classroom, or if a grade drops below a "C," I notify parents with a quick call. Through frequent contact with parents, I am able to assist students before a grade falls too drastically. Quick intervention with students/parents on unsuccessful tests, missing assignments or other mishaps allows for remediation and retakes on tests. If parents and students are aware that the instructor is monitoring most situations, the motivation is higher for students to succeed the first time.

Another tenet of OBE is that of specification of expected learning outcomes. In addition to the general guidelines given early in the course, each day as the students enter the classroom the daily objectives are on the board. On Mondays, the weekly or unit objectives are delineated. In addition to writing the objectives on the board, I verbally review them at the beginning of each class period, making a special attempt to reach each child's learning style. Often as students enter the classroom, the overhead is on with the following: "Be thinking about........." (Example- "How did Walter Dean Myers use his early childhood experiences to bring authenticity to his novels?") The concept at work is that of utilizing each class moment to the maximum.

Throughout the course I always make a sincere attempt to meet each student at his/her level of competency and build upon the *strengths already there*. The first week I create a profile of reading/writing strengths of each student. This is done in a non threatening manner and is personalized as much as possible. Students are tested with the revised Gates-MacGinite Reading Tests---Vocabulary and Comprehension. Students are told the tests will not be reflected in their grades, but that they must try their best. Overall, I find this test to be quite accurate, and it usually correlates with longer tests for reliability and validity. In addition, students produce a writing sample in the classroom while listening to classical music.

During this time of testing and creating a classroom climate, students are given the opportunity to read orally as part of the classroom situation so that I can check for miscue analysis, though they are also given the choice to read privately with the instructor. When students have choices and options, they usually perform at higher levels.

As part of the profile students complete two different interest inventories. The inventories are not the usual checklist type of inventory but are sentence or short paragraph answers. Students also write a brief biography at this time and share these with a small group. By the end of the first several days of the course, students have clear objectives of the program, a classroom climate of mutual respect has been built and I have a great deal of information about each student. At this juncture I have completed assessment of student mastery in varied areas, and I can determine where my instructional levels will begin.

After my own evaluation of individual students I request a conference with tutors/intervention specialists, speech therapists and any others who may be assisting students in special areas. By doing this I can more concisely assess the progress and the specific needs of students with special requirements. This is an ongoing process of evaluation.

On a weekly basis each classroom teacher gives a written report to the intervention and Learning Disability teachers, and another element of Outcome-Based education is met in terms of ongoing assessment.

When we are completing the inventories the students discuss books, authors, their own writing and other aspects of the total reading-writing connection. As an instructor, I am already creating cooperative learning groups. In an informal manner I see the students who are verbal, the ones who are shy and those who will benefit from being in particular group situations.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS INFLUENCE SELF-CONCEPT WHICH CONTROLS LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR

While there are many aspects of Outcome-Based education that accentuate individual mastery of concepts, cooperative learning groups enhance learning for students will take risks in small groups but who would might not take them in a large group setting. Sometimes students are placed randomly in cooperative learning situations, but usually they are placed according to a plan of high achiever, low achiever and perhaps one or two students of average ability. This grouping maximizes the learning hours and time on task within a given classroom. Students sharpen creative thinking skills by asking questions in a limited group, and they share the responsibility for learning.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT BY STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

Often the students assess themselves or each other when they "present" the results of their small group work. Sometimes they present a chapter of a novel; sometimes the presentation can be a skit from a book which their small group is reading, and occasionally students give part of the lesson on new information. Students that are "presenting" give other students short objective tests, and thus they receive an assessment of their efforts. The other classmates have a written form with which to evaluate the group presentation. Sometimes numerical grades are given to the groups by their peers, and the scores are subsequently tallied by the instructor and used for a grade. Most students enjoy and learn from the feedback of their peers.

It is important to note that integral to my program is the completion of projects, reports and group activities rather than a myriad of summative tests. These evaluations are a better assessment of students' thoughts. The projects are often open-ended, giving the students freedom to explore whatever their interests and abilities lead them to. By allowing this freedom I am seldom disappointed. Usually students entrusted with both freedom and responsibility will rise to the occasion.

Other areas in the language arts/reading programs where ongoing assessment is of great value is in peer editing and teacher conferences. In order to teach reading and writing in a comprehensive manner, the teacher must realize that not all students will be working on the same activity during the same time. Varying the time for learning according to the needs of each student and the complexity of the task are especially apparent in the writing process. Some students will be drafting first issues of their written work, others will be revising and editing, and some will be polishing a final draft.

Student intervention with a specific writing partner or small group will give the necessary feedback. I find that students often take constructive criticism more easily from each other than from an instructor. I have created a form the peer editor can use to express areas of expertise or concern while working with another student. We look for the concise objective of the writing assignment and observe if the learning was addressed. (If the writing project focused upon sensory details; were they used effectively? If the paper presented comparisons and/or contrasts; were these presented and presented appropriately in the writing?)

When students know the next day's class period will be concerned with peer editing, they WILL have their assignment done. They do not want to disappoint the rest of the students in their group, and they realize their input is essential to the class. Thus the concept of student responsibility is an integral part of the classroom situation.

While peer editing is essential, teacher conferences are a significant feature of the writing process. Students feel very special as the instructor focuses all his/her attention on the student and the writing. When I conference with students I always distinguish at least two areas of expertise and two areas for improvement on a given assignment. I keep written notes on the writing details, and the student keeps written verification of these notes. Thus both teacher and student know where the student needs instruction, and the teacher can easily and accurately check for mastery of this objective in the next writing piece. Students keep their writing in a portfolio and often select representative work for the portfolio with the input of the instructor as well as that of other students.

THE WORLD IS MY TEXTBOOK

It is significant to note that I do not use a textbook for my classes. Such a book would bring a sense of confinement, and I prefer to use trade books and authentic materials from the world around the students. Each year I try to develop units of study that meet the changing needs of the student population. Past units have been socioeconomic issues, ecology and rock and roll. In this manner I can build upon the interests of the students and individualize their classroom experience.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS OF AN OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. Attempt to have your total staff in concert with the tenets of your program. Teachers need updated education and are usually open to new ideas and will implement them if they feel significant support from administration and other staff members. Plan a

day-long program at the outset for introducing and educating the staff with the objectives of your resolve. Speakers for our staff development programs have included both outside presenters and our own personnel. Sometimes outside presenters have a wide appeal and bring a fresh approach to a given subject. Having been a participant in the Ohio Writing Project , I was able to network with others when my department chairperson and I planned a staff development day. Those planning the program interfaced with department chairpersons and received input concerning the needs and wants of the staff before contacting speakers. Our brought in speakers from a nearby university, a few presenters from the Ohio Writing Project and some of our own staff members. We permitted staff members to select their own breakout sessions, and they evaluated the program on several different levels. We felt our program was effective for many reasons, but one was the direct input of the staff in deciding what they wanted in terms of staff development.

2. Continue to conference and interface with content area teachers. Because language arts is the basis for all other disciplines, continue to make yourself available to other staff member for support and help with specific areas of Outcome-Based education. Some staff members will need more direction and support as new concepts are introduced and implemented. Be familiar with the texts used by other departments, and you will be able to give assistance as new ideas are implemented. You will be able to offer valuable input as to how some lessons may be taught using the tenets of OBE.

3. Success is contagious, and others will see the benefits of the program and be more eager to share their concerns and ideas with you. Sometimes it is beneficial to begin with

just a few new ideas, and then as a comfort zone is established, the more dramatic steps can be taken.

I don't mean to imply that every time a class meets it will incorporate all aspects of OBE. However, by focusing on the growth and progress of the individual student, one usually sees a pattern of success. Mutual trust is built from the first day of the course and carries through to every aspect of the classroom experience. Every class has a personality of its own, and the unique chemistry of students and instructors learning and teaching with common goals is a form of achievement that can not easily be measured. The long-term effects of competent teachers interacting with motivated students is never really known. However, one can identify when short-term goals have been met. Such successes of student-teacher cooperation and achievement have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of my own teaching.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected Abstracts from the ERIC Educational Resources Database

ERIC Clearinghouse on
Reading, English, and Communication
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

How to Read an ERIC Abstract and Find Related Articles on this Subject

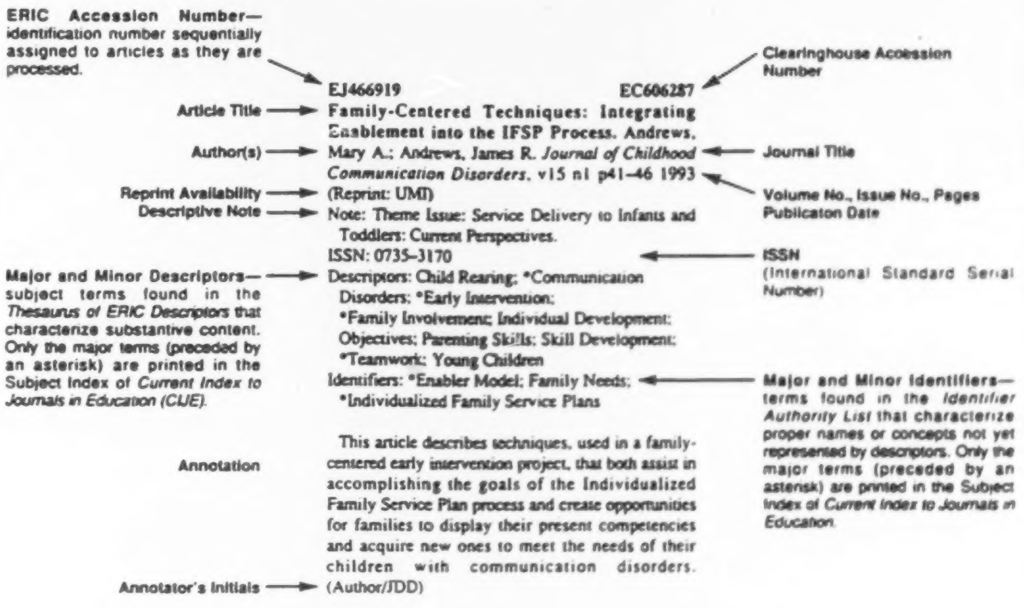
The ERIC educational resource database includes more than 800,000 bibliographic records. Educational resources listed in the ERIC database are of two types: EJ, journal (magazine) articles, which are easily found in most Education libraries, or through interlibrary loan; and ED, documents such as Master's theses, which are available at any library that has an ERIC microfiche collection. ED documents can also be ordered directly from ERIC Document Reproduction Service by using the form at the end of this bibliography section.

You may also wish to perform your own ERIC database search, to retrieve the most current information on your topic. This is easily done at any Education library; it may also be available to you online through your university computing system.

In the following bibliography, we have selected some recent relevant articles that you may wish to read for your further knowledge, or to use in a Distance Education Application/Research Project. ERIC abstracts are easy to read, once you are used to the system, which is detailed below.

Sample ERIC Abstract

Note that this abstract has an EJ accession number, which means that the work abstracted is a journal article.



EJ466919 EC606287
Family-Centered Techniques: Integrating Enablement into the IFSP Process. Andrews, Mary A.; Andrews, James R. *Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders*, v15 n1 p41–46 1993
(Reprint: UMI)
Note: Theme Issue: Service Delivery to Infants and Toddlers: Current Perspectives.
ISSN: 0735-3170
Descriptors: Child Rearing; *Communication Disorders; *Early Intervention; *Family Involvement; Individual Development; Objectives; Parenting Skills; Skill Development; *Teamwork; Young Children
Identifiers: *Enabler Model; Family Needs; *Individualized Family Service Plans

This article describes techniques, used in a family-centered early intervention project, that both assist in accomplishing the goals of the Individualized Family Service Plan process and create opportunities for families to display their present competencies and acquire new ones to meet the needs of their children with communication disorders. (Author/JDD)

ERIC Accession Number—identification number sequentially assigned to articles as they are processed.

Clearinghouse Accession Number

Article Title

Author(s)

Journal Title

Volume No., Issue No., Pages Publicaton Date

Reprint Availability

Descriptive Note

ISSN (International Standard Serial Number)

Major and Minor Descriptors—subject terms found in the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* that characterize substantive content. Only the major terms (preceded by an asterisk) are printed in the Subject Index of *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*.

Major and Minor Identifiers—terms found in the *Identifier Authority List* that characterize proper names or concepts not yet represented by descriptors. Only the major terms (preceded by an asterisk) are printed in the Subject Index of *Current Index to Journals in Education*.

Annotation

Annotator's Initials

Note: The format of an ERIC Journal Article resume will vary according to the source from which the database is accessed. The above format is from the printed index. *Current Index to Journals in Education*.

1/95

The Following Documents on Outcome-Based Education are from the ERIC Educational Resources Database

AN: EJ487223
AU: Otto,-Robert
TI: The New Social Studies: The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990.
PY: 1994
JN: Social-Studies; v85 n3 p106-09 May-Jun 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Describes the origins, development, and significant characteristics of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Discusses the importance of outcome-based assessment in the program and presents eight "valued outcomes" that will be assessed in social studies. (CFR)

AN: EJ486463
AU: Evans,-Karen-M.; King,-Jean-A.
TI: Outcome-Based and Gifted Education: Can We Assume Continued Support?
PY: 1994
JN: Roeper-Review; v16 n4 p260-64 Jun 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Outcome-based education (OBE) is a reform movement that puts equity in the forefront, ties excellence to outcomes, and recognizes giftedness only as it is expressed by achievement. Gains brought about by pull-out, mentoring, and compaction programs may be lost if needs of gifted students are not recognized under OBE. (JDD)

AN: EJ486340
AU: Schwarz,-Gretchen; Cavener,-Lee-Ann
TI: Outcome-Based Education and Curriculum Change: Advocacy, Practice, and Critique.
PY: 1994
JN: Journal-of-Curriculum-and-Supervision; v9 n4 p326-38 Sum 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Explores outcome-based education, tracing its historical basis in competency-based education and mastery learning. Discusses the results of an ongoing dialogue between the authors (a classroom teacher and a university researcher). Although OBE offers some powerful ideas, it is not radical enough. OBE is based on behavioral objectives determined by outsiders not by the local learning community. (Contains 32 references.) (MLH)

AN: EJ486159
AU: Boschee,-Floyd; Baron,-Mark-A.
TI: OBE: Some Answers for the Uninitiated.
PY: 1994
JN: Clearing-House; v67 n4 p193-96 Mar-Apr 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Discusses outcome-based education (OBE): what it is, its underlying beliefs, why schools should change to it, objections to it, needs it can fulfill, and how it begins. (SR)

AN: EJ485544
AU: Kudlas,-John-M.
TI: Implications of OBE: What Should You Know about Outcome-Based Education?
PY: 1994
JN: Science-Teacher; v61 n5 p32-35 May 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Discusses the positive and negative aspects of outcome-based education. Also included in the discussion are recommendations for the successful implementation of outcome-based education. (ZWH)

AN: EJ483363
AU: Kaplan,-George-R.
TI: Shotgun Wedding: Notes on Public Education's Encounter with the New Christian Right.
PY: 1994
JN: Phi-Delta-Kappan; v75 n9 pK1-K12 May 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Christian Right's stepped-up involvement in school life has been catalyzed by pervasive belief that schools are failing and by media disregard of proschool counterarguments. Although Christian takeover of public education is not imminent, Religious Right is identifying problems that concern most Americans and bringing new players and perspectives into school government. Administrators must cultivate support for sound educational practices. (MLH)

AN: EJ483291
AU: Capper,-Colleen-A.
TI: "And Justice for All:" Critical Perspectives on Outcomes-Based Education in the Context of Secondary School Restructuring.
PY: 1994
JN: Journal-of-School-Leadership; v4 n2 p132-55 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Uses qualitative research methods (interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis) to determine whether a rural midwestern high school's restructuring process serves particular values and silences others. Findings showed lack of consideration for social power and student identity issues. Basic restructuring elements (outcome-based education and success for all students) were embraced without discussing educators' obligations to students. (Contains 18 references.) (MLH)

AN: EJ482527
AU: Mitchell,-Linda; And-Others
TI: Designing Successful Learning: Staff Development for Outcome-Based Instruction.
PY: 1993
JN: Journal-of-Staff-Development; v14 n3 p28-31 Sum 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Describes the planning, facilitation, continuation, and evaluation of Designing Successful Learning, an effective staff development program created to facilitate district restructuring and improve student outcomes. The program focuses teachers' attention on cooperative learning, interdisciplinary instruction, performance assessment, student diversity, and instructional technology. (SM)

AN: EJ481286
AU: Streshly,-William-A.; Newcomer,-Leland

TI: Managing Change with Accountability: A Challenge for Educators.
PY: 1994
JN: NASSP-Bulletin; v78 n560 p62-68 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: School board and community have only two ways to achieve accountability: by prescribing teaching methodology and establishing expensive supervisory superstructure to enforce it; or by establishing desired learning outcome standards and products and requiring professional staff to develop plans to achieve them and criteria to evaluate results. Teachers and principals can be creative professionals only by choosing second alternative. (MLH)

AN: EJ481255
AU: Fritz,-Marshall
TI: Why OBE and the Traditionalists Are Both Wrong.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p79-82 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Although the traditionalists prefer a mandated curriculum and rigid top-down regulations, the outcome-based proponents are vague about the means for students to achieve compulsory end results. Neither approach is appropriate, since each is based on a coercive model. One Christian academy balances a traditionalist approach in the affective domain with considerable student leeway in designing academic outcomes. (10 references.) (MLH)

AN: EJ481254
AU: Zitterkopf,-Randy
TI: A Fundamentalist's Defense of OBE.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p76-78 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Christian fundamentalists must cease their scapegoating of outcome-based education, since churches, like other organizations, are goal oriented, and OBE is neither public education's devil nor its savior. Since finances are limited, schools should focus on the cognitive/academic domain and embed affective outcomes within it. Making social/affective values a top priority hinders achievement of all outcomes. (MLH)

AN: EJ481252
AU: McGhan,-Barry
TI: The Possible Outcomes of Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p70-72 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Choosing outcome-based education over a traditional time-based approach means that students will progress through a given set of outcomes at different rates. To prevent scheduling difficulties, schools could make the transition to flexible scheduling and performance contracts within a traditional curriculum. Then teachers could develop interdisciplinary approaches, choose common outcomes, and stress effort over ability. (MLH)

AN: EJ481251
AU: Pliska,-Ann-Maureen; McQuaide,-Judith
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p66-69 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: In Pennsylvania, introduction of student learning outcomes became a major battle rather than a reasoned debate, and final language of the proposed regulations was somewhat muted. Because the state failed to cultivate the grass-roots support necessary for reform, a vocal, effective opposition emerged, and sensation overshadowed real issues. Reformers must communicate to stakeholders, marshal support, and defuse the opposition. (MLH)

AN: EJ481245
AU: Shriner,-James-G.; And-Others
TI: "All" Means "All"--Including Students with Disabilities.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p38-42 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: The National Center on Educational Outcomes offers guidelines for including students with disabilities when identifying outcomes, assessing students, defining acceptable performance, and reporting on schools' progress in meeting outcomes. Schools should include all students in their accountability and data collection programs. All students have the right to learn to meet high, rigorous content standards. (Contains 16 references.) (MLH)

AN: EJ481243
AU: Jasa,-Sharon; Enger,-Lin
TI: Applying OBE to Arts Education.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p30-32 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Adopting an outcome-based system at Minnesota's State Arts High School has produced sweeping changes that transcend curriculum reorganization, ungraded report cards, and a revised daily schedule. The school prints outcomes on students' course report forms, or student learning plans; teachers indicate performance levels of "challenge," "superior," or "satisfactory." Clearly defined achievement standards benefit everyone. (MLH)

AN: EJ481242
AU: Brandt,-Ron
TI: On Creating an Environment Where All Students Learn: A Conversation with Al Mamary.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n6 p24-28 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Although both mastery learning and outcome-based education require students to meet certain criteria, OBE encourages students to assess

themselves. Johnson City (New York) Schools stress three outcomes: academics, work and process skills, and attitudes. The key to Johnson City's success lies in clearly defining these desired outcomes, getting broad community support, and adopting a feasible implementation plan. (MLH)

AN: EJ479847
AU: See,-John
TI: Technology and Outcome-Based Education: Connections in Concept and Practice.
PY: 1994
JN: Computing-Teacher; v21 n6 p30-31,52 Mar 1994
AV: UMI
AB: Considers new roles for information technology in educational transformation. Topics discussed include the rise of digital information; school restructuring and outcome-based education; changing the role of teachers; changing what and how students learn; and changing the management of student assessment. (LRW)

AN: EJ477036
AU: Bagnall,-Richard-G.
TI: Performance Indicators and Outcomes as Measures of Educational Quality: A Cautionary Critique.
PY: 1994
JN: International-Journal-of-Lifelong-Education; v13 n1 p19-32 Jan-Feb 1994
AB: Quality in outcomes-based education depends on type of educational goals and outcomes and a view of humanity as motivated by self-interest. When these requirements are not met, outcomes-driven education may be dehumanizing and educationally trivializing. (SK)

AN: EJ476419
AU: Bergen,-Doris
TI: Authentic Performance Assessments.
PY: 1994
JN: Childhood-Education; v70 n2 p99-102 Win 1993-94
AV: UMI
AB: Examines the trend toward outcome-based assessment that demonstrates what children have really learned by evaluating what they can do in actual or simulated applied situations. Discusses theories of performance assessment, the qualities of good authentic performance assessment, and ways of integrating authentic assessment with traditional assessment procedures. (TJQ)

AN: EJ475775
AU: Capper,-Colleen-A.; Jamison,-Michael-T.
TI: Outcomes-Based Education Reexamined: From Structural Functionalism to Poststructuralism.
PY: 1993
JN: Educational-Policy; v7 n4 p427-46 Dec 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Outcomes-based education (OBE) views itself as drastic break from current inequitable educational practices and means of providing educational success for all students. Reexamines OBE from a multiparadigm perspective of organizations and educational administration. Although certain OBE facets may be empowering to students and teachers, much of the system continues to be lodged in a framework geared toward structure and control. (MLH)

AN: EJ474275
AU: Ledell,-Marjorie-A.
TI: To Be or Not to OBE?
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n4 p18-19 Dec-Jan 1993-94
AV: UMI
AB: Critics of outcomes-based education and proponents of vouchers, school choice, creationism, and tax limitation measures often seem to be advocating publicly funded private education. School leaders attempting to implement OBE or other improvement programs should describe programs properly, involve the community, develop and implement a communications strategy, and be willing to debate the private-versus-public-education issue. (MLH)

AN: EJ474274
AU: McQuaide,-Judith; Pliska,-Ann-Maureen
TI: The Challenge to Pennsylvania's Education Reform.
PY: 1994
JN: Educational-Leadership; v51 n4 p16-21 Dec-Jan 1993-94
AV: UMI
AB: Controversy over a proposed outcome-based-education package in Pennsylvania forced school reformers to eliminate explicit values instruction from the curriculum. Although respect and responsibility were agreed-upon moral values, tolerance was not. Proponents erred by failing to publicize and promote positive aspects of the reform, underestimating OBE opposition, and describing vague outcomes and measurable behaviors. (Contains 23 references.) (MLH)

AN: EJ472464
AU: Clemons,-Molly-J.
TI: Time Elements May Require Change.
PY: 1993
JN: Communication:-Journalism-Education-Today-(C:JET); v27 n1 p14-16 Fall 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Argues that school districts may need to use a different time frame to accommodate the varied time requirements of the more flexible outcome-based education. Discusses three "alternate" scheduling methods currently in use and how they affect the teaching of journalism. (SR)

AN: EJ472461
AU: Schaub,-Laura
TI: Outcome Based Education: A "Natural" for Journalism Curriculum Development.
PY: 1993
JN: Communication:-Journalism-Education-Today-(C:JET); v27 n1 p6-9 Fall 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Describes a method for writing curriculum for journalism classes and publications courses, using the Outcome-Based Education model combined with

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a sequential developmental approach such as Bloom's Taxonomy. Includes learning objective examples and a list of journalism learner outcomes. (SR)

AN: EJ471902
AU: Schalock,-H.-Del; And-Others
TI: Focusing on Learning Gains by Pupils Taught: A Central Figure of Oregon's Outcome-Based Approach to the Initial Preparation and Licensure of Teachers.
PY: 1993
JN: Journal-of-Personnel-Evaluation-in-Education; v7 n2 p135-58 Aug 1993
AV: UMI
NT: Special issue topic: "Student Learning in Teacher Evaluation and School Improvement."
AB: In 1987, Oregon moved to an outcome-based approach to teacher preparation and licensure, insisting on evidence of learning gains by students taught as one of the accomplishments that teachers need to demonstrate. Oregon's program and its implications for teacher education and educational improvement are discussed. (SLD)

AN: EJ470503
AU: Zlatos,-Bill
TI: Outcomes-Based Outrage.
PY: 1993
JN: Executive-Educator; v15 n9 p12-16 Sep 1993
AV: UMI
AB: If outcomes-based education is the darling of education reformers, it is the devil to conservative parents, taxpayer groups, and legislators who oppose it. Despite some initial successes in several states, critics charge that the states pushing OBE have no evidence that it works. Costs are another factor. So far, the ultraconservatives are winning. (MLH)

AN: EJ469473
AU: Geddert,-Phyllis
TI: Student Success through Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1993
JN: Alberta-Journal-of-Educational-Research; v39 n2 p205-15 Jun 1993
NT: Theme issue with title "The Educational Quality Indicators Initiative: A Success Story."
AB: In response to Alberta's Educational Quality Indicators initiative, Fort McMurray Catholic Schools implemented outcome-based mathematics instruction in 30 classrooms, grades 2-10. Collaborative planning and implementation of outcome-based education principles led to improvements in student achievement, attitudes, and responsibility. (SV)

AN: EJ465317
AU: Glatthorn,-Allan-A.
TI: Outcome-Based Education: Reform and the Curriculum Process.
PY: 1993
JN: Journal-of-Curriculum-and-Supervision; v8 n4 p354-64 Sum 1993
AV: UMI
DE: Elementary-Secondary-Education
AB: Provides an objective critique of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) as a reform strategy and a curriculum process, based on a literature review and experience in North Carolina schools. OBE is theoretically narrow, but charges concerning OBE's technocratic, uncaring orientation lack foundation. The curriculum process allows teacher participation. OBE accommodates a range of outcomes, but curriculum materials seem undistinguished. (19 references) (MLH)

AN: EJ465316
AU: McKernan,-Jim
TI: Some Limitations of Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1993
JN: Journal-of-Curriculum-and-Supervision; v8 n4 p343-53 Sum 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Criticizes outcome-based education for reducing education, teaching, and learning to forms of human engineering and quasi-scientific planning procedures geared toward instrumental means and specified ends. Stating outcomes as a comprehensive form of intellectual scaffolding limits inquiry and speculation and gives schools and curriculum framers unwarranted authority over knowledge and understanding. An alternative procedural-inquiry model is proposed. (19 references) (MLH)

AN: EJ461884
AU: O'Neil,-John
TI: Making Sense of Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1993
JN: Instructor; v102 n5 p46-47 Jan 1993
AV: UMI
AB: Outcome-based education (OBE), which grew out of the mastery learning movement, calls for determining the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind students need in preparation for life after graduation. The article describes the history and implementation of OBE and provides a list of OBE-based resources. (SM)

AN: EJ455346
AU: Towers,-James-M.
TI: Outcome-Based Education: Another Educational Bandwagon?
PY: 1992
JN: Educational-Forum; v56 n3 p291-305 Spr 1992
AV: UMI
AB: Traces the roots of outcome-based education in mastery learning. Considers such obstacles as lack of reform preconditions, poor understanding of program features, teacher resistance, teacher domestication, staff mobility, and routinization. (SK)

AN: EJ454407
AU: Brandt,-Ron
TI: On Outcome-Based Education: A Conversation with Bill Spady.
PY: 1993
JN: Educational-Leadership; v50 n4 p66-70 Dec-Jan 1992-93
AV: UMI
AB: An interview with the director of the recently established International Center on Outcome-Based Restructuring explains that outcome-based education

focuses on defining, pursuing, and ensuring success with the same high-level outcomes for all students. (MLF)

AN: EJ447130
AU: Streshly,-William; Bernd,-Mac
TI: School Reform: Real Improvement Takes Time.
PY: 1992
JN: Journal-of-School-Leadership; v2 n3 p320-29 Jul 1992
AB: Although politicians and educational leaders are pressured to devise quick-fix educational reforms, significant change takes time, and reform efforts may not be fully measurable for 10 years or more. Case study of a California school district given 10 uninterrupted years to develop and implement an outcome-based instructional model suggests that more time be given to implement program improvement strategies. (MLH)

AN: EJ434408
AU: Nyland,-Larry
TI: One District's Journey to Success with Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1991
JN: School-Administrator; v48 n9 p29,31-32,34-35 Nov 1991
AB: Despite serving growing numbers of at-risk students, Pasco (Washington) School District has been transformed through outcome-based education into a district widely recognized for quality. Pasco's OBE process demanded a school vision and mission statement; intensive teacher retraining; implementation of mastery learning, reality therapy, and teacher teaming goals; and focus on outputs. (18 references) (MLH)

AN: EJ432790
AU: King,-Jean-A.; Evans,-Karen-M.
TI: Can We Achieve Outcome-Based Education?
PY: 1991
JN: Educational-Leadership; v49 n2 p73-75 Oct 1991
AV: UMI
AB: Outcome-based education is rooted in earlier ideas, such as Tyler's objectives, Spady's outcomes, Glaser's criterion-referenced measurement, Bloom's mastery learning, 1970s accountability concerns, and the 1960s competency-based education movement. Minnesota's experience suggests various practical implementation challenges concerned with curriculum development, instructional implications, appropriate measurement, and staff development. (19 references) (MLH)

AN: EJ432789
AU: Spady,-William-G.; Marshall,-Kit-J.
TI: Beyond Traditional Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1991
JN: Educational-Leadership; v49 n2 p67-72 Oct 1991
AV: UMI
AB: Transitional outcome-based education lies in the twilight zone between traditional subject matter curriculum structures and planning processes and the future-role priorities inherent in transformational OBE. Districts go through incorporation, integration, and redefinition stages in implementing transitional OBE. Transformational OBE's guiding vision is that of competent future citizen. A sidebar summarizes key OBE principles. (MLH)

AN: ED371880
AU: Burke,-Kay
TI: The Mindful School: How To Assess Thoughtful Outcomes. K-College.
PY: 1993
AV: IRI/Skylight Publishing, Inc., 200 East Wood Street, Suite 274, Palatine, IL 60067.
NT: 194 p.; Foreword by Arthur L. Costa.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
AB: Authentic assessment, as referred to in this book, encompasses meaningful tasks, positive interaction between teachers and students, methods that emphasize higher-order thinking skills, and strategies that allow students to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning. Most important, authentic assessment means helping students to apply and transfer specific skills to real-life situations. This guide is a resource for helping educators understand, redefine, and reshape their own assessment practices. A wide range of alternative forms of assessment is presented in a meaningful and practical format. Each chapter introduces a different assessment tool and includes a description of the assessment method and discussion of why and how it should be used. Examples of the many assessments are provided, as well as opportunities to create original tools and perform self-evaluation. Following an introduction discussing the current status of assessment, the 12 chapter topics are: (1) thoughtful outcomes; (2) standardized tests; (3) teacher-made tests; (4) portfolios; (5) performances and exhibitions; (6) projects; (7) learning logs and journals; (8) metacognitive reflection; (9) observation checklists; (10) graphic organizers; (11) interviews and conferences; and (12) final grades. Contains 111 references. (TJQ)

AN: ED369227
AU: Thurlow,-Martha-L.
TI: Implications of Outcomes-Based Education for Children with Disabilities. Synthesis Report 6.
CS: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Alexandria, VA.; National Center on Educational Outcomes, Minneapolis, MN.; Saint Cloud State Univ., MN.
PY: 1993
NT: 13 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children (Sanibel Island, FL, January 21, 1993).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: This paper examines the concept of "outcomes-based education" (OBE), how it was developed, how it relates to other current reforms that encompass the notion of outcomes, and how it relates to students with disabilities in theory and in practice. Outcomes-based education holds that all children can learn and succeed and that schools are responsible for ensuring the success of all students. Two major OBE models are John Champlin's

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Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model and William Spady's High Success Network Strategic Design Model. OBE fits within a range of reforms that address school structure and management, community and business involvement, assessment techniques, and accountability. In theory, OBE is consistent with the belief that students with disabilities may have different learning rates or different learning styles to which instruction needs to be adjusted. In practice, efforts in some states to implement OBE have encountered resistance by state legislatures. Implications of OBE for students with disabilities are outlined. Promises, pitfalls, and challenges associated with outcomes-based education for children with disabilities are highlighted. (Contains 18 references.) (JDD)

AN: ED368770
AU: Guskey,-Thomas-R.
TI: Outcome-Based Education and Mastery Learning: Clarifying the Differences.
PY: 1994
NT: 21 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-6, 1994).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: Questions frequently arise about the origins of outcome-based education and mastery learning, their similarities and differences, their theoretical and practical links, and evidence about their effects on student learning. Historical and theoretical perspectives show a clear distinction between outcome-based education and mastery learning. Outcome-based education is principally a curriculum reform model with definite implications for the assessment of student learning. Mastery learning, while known by various names and in various forms, is principally an instructional strategy labeled by B. S. Bloom, and designed to help teachers enhance the quality of their teaching procedures so that more of their students learn excellently. Outcome-based education and mastery learning address different educational concerns, but their potential if used in combination is clear. The combination of a thoughtful curriculum and effective instructional practices makes true improvement in learning possible. One figure illustrates the discussion. (Contains 27 references.) (SLD)

AN: ED368695
TI: A Design for Building Outcomes-focused Curricula.
CS: Kansas State Board of Education, Topeka.
PY: 1993
NT: 37 p.; For related documents, see SP 035 122-123.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
AB: Consistent with school restructuring efforts and Kansas state standards of performance, this resource document provides direction and resources to practitioners preparing to move their schools toward an outcomes-based integrated curriculum. Following an introduction, the document presents discussions of: (1) the transition from a traditional to a transformational curriculum; (2) the statewide organizational structure for curriculum development; (3) integrating and aligning outcomes-based assessment, feedback, and instructional strategies; (4) districtwide outcomes-driven curriculum; (5) expectations of Kansas's local districts and schools; (6) outcomes adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education; (7) integrating outcomes within the school curriculum; (8) composition of a mission statement and outcomes teams; (9) the mission statement; and (10) learner exit outcomes, program and course level outcomes, and unit and lesson outcomes. Appendixes provide a glossary and a bibliography. (LL)

AN: ED360356
AU: Gray,-I.-Lee, Ed.; Hymel,-Glenn-M., Ed.
TI: Successful Schooling for All: A Primer on Outcome-Based Education and Mastery Learning.
PY: 1992
AV: Network for Outcome-Based Schools, Johnson City Central Schools, 666 Reynolds Road, Johnson City, NY 13790 (1-9 copies, $10.95 each; 10 or more copies, $9 each).
NT: 155 p.; Papers previously published in "Outcomes," the quarterly journal of the Network for Outcome-Based Schools.
PR: Document Not Available from EDRS.
AB: This collection brings together writings on two powerful approaches to education, outcome-based education (OBE) and mastery learning. OBE is about refocusing on the people in the educational system and their success in achieving excellence as learners and teachers. The following papers are included: (1) "Toward a Network Description of Outcome-Based Education" (Board of Directors of the Network for Outcome-Based Schools); (2) "Outcome-Based Schools: A Definition" (Robert E. Blum); (3) "Key Messages from the High Success Program on OBE: Part I" (William G. Spady); (4) "Key Messages from the High Success Program on OBE: Part II" (William G. Spady); (5) "Four Phases in Creating and Managing an Outcome-Based Program" (John R. Champlin); (6) "Outcome-Based Education Operationalized in the Classroom: The Glendale Outcome-Based Instructional Model" (Spence Rogers and the Glendale OBI Team); (7) "A Functional Analysis of Mastery Learning" (Lorin W. Anderson); (8) "Implications of Psychological Research on Mastery Learning" (S. Alan Cohen); (9) "The Contributions of Mastery Learning" (Thomas R. Guskey); (10) "Belief Systems and Mastery Learning" (James H. Block); (11) "Demystifying Mastery Learning" (Robert Burns and Carrie Kojimoto); (12) "Outcome-Based Schools and Mastery Learning: A Desirable Link" (Lorin W. Anderson); (13) "Outcome-Based Education/Mastery Learning: What Is It? Why Do It? How Do You Do It?" (Carol Barber); and (14) "A Macromodel of Effective, Outcome-Based, Mastery Learning School Variables: An Expanded View" (Glen M. Hymel). (SLD)

AN: ED359205
AU: Shanks,-Joyce
TI: Unintended Outcomes: Curriculum and Outcome-Based Education.
PY: 1993

NT: 14 p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: Outcome based education (OBE) is a way to organize curriculum and instruction so that the focus is on what educators want students to achieve. Key principles are defining clear outcomes, expanding learning opportunities to better achieve these outcomes, and having high expectations for learning success. OBE must be viewed as a process, rather than a predetermined program. Most current OBE applications are traditional OBE, in which the starting transitional OBE, where higher order competencies are defined, but curriculum is not completely redesigned. In a third level, transformational OBE, curriculum development begins after the outcomes are defined in terms of what a person should do or know. Uses of OBE in various school districts are described. OBE is gaining acceptance at a time when school reform is a national priority. The OBE mission focuses on what students are able to do. Some limitations of OBE, and some of the political influences that characterize knowledge production are reviewed. Successful OBE depends on a careful examination of the politics of curriculum development and the role teachers will assume. (SLD)

AN: ED357457
AU: McNeir,-Gwennis
TI: Outcomes-Based Education: Tool for Restructuring.
CS: Oregon School Study Council, Eugene.
PY: 1993
JN: OSSC-Bulletin; v36 n8 Apr 1993
AV: Publication Sales, Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403 ($7 prepaid; $2.50 postage and handling on billed orders).
NT: 36 p.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
AB: Traditional approaches to education use the level of inputs as a measure of effectiveness. Outcomes-based education (OBE) is based on the concept that educational success should be measured by what students learn, rather than by what they are taught. As a systems-level restructuring tool, OBE calls for success for all students, not just academic or vocational success, but success as well-rounded human beings. Since OBE has developed from several sources, it does not have one single authoritative model. Basic principles form the foundation of OBE: a clear focus on outcomes, expanded opportunity and instructional support, and high expectations for learning success. Views differ on whether OBE is revolutionary in education or merely a repackaging of old methods. School districts adopting OBE must fully commit to it in spirit and in practice, and staff must abandon established methods and procedures. Outcomes also must not be confused with subject areas, and goals cannot be too narrowly defined. In the classroom, teachers must balance concerns about content and process, and develop new assessment tools. As found in several Oregon schools, OBE can be implemented gradually, but must involve all members of the school district and community. (Contains 27 references.) (JPT)

AN: ED347034
AU: Jacobsen,-Gary; Jacobsen,-Cynthia
TI: One School's Approach to Outcome Based Education.
PY: [1992]
NT: 8 p.; Paper presented at the International Rural and Small Schools Conference (Grand Forks, ND, March 30-April 1, 1992).
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
AB: This paper describes the efforts of a geographically isolated school district in Alaska to develop an outcome-based curriculum for preschool through 12th grade. In 1986, the new assistant superintendent for instruction introduced the idea of a district-wide outcome-based curriculum. The first curricular area selected for development was a preschool program. Over the course of 5 years, programs for the remaining grade levels were developed. Committee members included teachers, community members and parents, and school board members. The assistant superintendent served as the facilitator and resource person. The committees were trained to use the systems approach to the development of an outcome-based curriculum. This consisted of describing and explaining the idea of an outcome-based curriculum and training members to write learner outcomes in behavioral terms. The body of knowledge to be covered in a subject area was divided into major categories of areas called strands. Each strand was then divided into supporting areas called topics. The learner outcomes were vertically articulated throughout the curriculum moving sequentially from one grade level to the next. Implementation of the curriculum was effective because participating teachers felt a sense of ownership in the curriculum and the committees provided inservice workshops to the other teachers. This type of curriculum development project requires time and money. (KS)